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AN
EXPLANATION
OF
Scripture Prophecies,
BOTH
TYPICAL and LITERAL.

In Two VOLUMES.

VOL. I. Containing,

AN EXPLANATION of *Christ's* EPISTLES to the Seven Churches in *Asia*, of his PRAYER and BEATITUDES, together with St. *Paul's* PANOPLY, or WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD: All which are shewn to have a Mystical and Prophetical, as well as Literal Signification, and to bear a particular Reference to the Sevenfold State of *Christ's* Church upon Earth.

To which are prefixed,

A LETTER to the Rev. Dr. BERRIMAN, containing some Remarks on Dr. *Henry More's Exposition of the Seven Epistles to the Seven Churches.*

AND

Brief OBSERVATIONS on the Learned Mr. MEDE's *Clavis Apocalyptica*, and on some few Passages in his other *Apocalyptical* Writings.

By SAMUEL JOHNSON, A. M.
Vicar of Great Torrington, Devon.

READING,

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THE GENERAL
PREFACE.

THE Prophecies of the Old Testament relating to the *Messiah*, which have been fulfilled *already*, (and which have, upon a late Occasion, been so narrowly search'd into, so critically examin'd, and so fully vindicated) may be consider'd, in one View, as the *Basis* of all those other Prophecies that are *yet* to be fulfilled; the exact Completion of the former being as an Earnest, Pledge, and Security for the Accomplishment of the latter. And whether future Events be presignified by plain and express Predictions, or by more obscure Types and Allegories, the Completion of Prophecy either way speaks the Divinity of its Author, and de-

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mands our most serious Regard and ready Assent. And upon farther Enquiry it may appear, that there is a great deal *more* of Prophecy in Scripture, than we may at first apprehend; yea, that the *greatest Part* of the sacred Writings is *prophetical*, and that one Age is intended as a Prophecy to others, the preceding to those that come after. This at least we cannot but allow, that some of the Prophecies of the *Old Testament* are couch'd under *Historical Narrations*; and those of the *New* (besides that they have this too common with the other) do not always appear in their proper Form and Language, but sometimes lie hid and are conceal'd in *Precepts, Parables, Prayers, and Exhortations*. A Specimen of this may be seen in the Exposition I have given of *St. Paul's Panoply*, of our Saviour's *Beatitudes*, of the *Form of Prayer* he has prescrib'd us, and in the two following Essays, which contain Observations
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that may not be unworthy the Consideration of the Studious and Inquisitive in Matters of this Nature. These *latent* and *implicit* Prophecies, as I may call them, to distinguish them from those that are more *direct* and *express*, I have placed together in the First Volume, as belonging to the same Subject, or as proper Illustrations and corroborating Testimonies of that *mystical* Sense and Interpretation I have given of *Christ's* Epistles to the Seven Churches in *Asia*; which was publish'd, under another Title, about seven Years ago, but is now much alter'd and contracted.

The Second Volume consists of Expositions on some of the most remarkable *express* Prophecies that relate to Things *yet* to come. These indeed are such as cannot be fully understood *before* the Events happen: But that is no Reason why we should neglect to consider them, or be discouraged from attempting an Interpretation of them,

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according to the proper and natural Force of the Words, and the general Scope and Drift of the Prophecies themselves. They are given by way of Warning, Admonition, and Encouragement, for the Trial and Exercise of our Faith, to awaken our Fear and Caution, and to excite our Expectation and Hope. And whatever may be said of the following Expositions, *the Foundation of God standeth sure*; and the Prophecies themselves are certain and infallible, and contain Matters of the greatest Concern and Importance, and such as deserve the most serious Consideration and diligent Enquiry of the attentive *Christian* Reader.

The Difference between these two Sorts of Prophecies is set forth in Scripture by two apt Similitudes. St. *Paul* speaking of the Law as a *Typical* Dispensation, represents it as *having a shadow of good things to come*; And St. *Peter*, speaking of the Nature
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and End of Prophecy, calls it *a light shining in a dark place*. So that as *Types* and *Allegories* are a sort of *Darkness in the midst of Light*, (as all *Shadows* must be) so *Prophecy*, on the contrary, is a *Light in the midst of Darkness*. *Christ*, the Substance, before the Fulness of Time was come, was preceded and usher'd into the World by the *Shadows* of the Law: But after he came, and the Light of the Gospel had reach'd and pass'd its Meridian, the *Shadows* were left behind. But *Christ* will appear a second time without sin unto salvation. And what is there in the Law or in the Gospel to prefigure and represent this second Appearance? Here the *Types* fail us, and the *Shadows* are of no Service; and as there will be a Change in the End and Design, in the Manner and Circumstances of his next Advent, there must of necessity be a Change in the Signs that are to foreshew and introduce it. Here then we are to

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seek not for *Shadows* and *Semblances*, but for *Truths* and *Realities*: And these we shall find in the Predictions of the Old and New Testament. Types and Prophecies *both* preceded and foreshew'd his *First* Coming; but 'tis *Prophecy only* that can give us a full and undoubted Assurance of his *Second*. For as to those Signs in the Heavens and in the Earth, that are to be the Forerunners of his Coming, these are Part of the Events foretold and presignified by our Lord himself, or the Prophetick Spirit. St. *Peter* therefore writing to the *Jewish* Converts, and endeavouring to settle them in the Belief of this great Point of *Christian* Doctrine, which was so necessary to keep them stedfast under a Sense of present Sufferings, or any violent Shock of Persecution, plainly intimates that he would not have them rest altogether, for the Certainty of this awful Event, upon *Types* and *Figures*, or upon such Notices
and

and Representations, as their Fathers were accustom'd to under the old Dispensation, such as the frequent Display of the *Shechinah*, or of some visible and glorious Symbols of the Divine Presence; but that they should likewise have Recourse to the *Word of Prophecy*, as the best Means to come to a Certainty in this Point. This seems to be the true Meaning of that noted Passage in the first Chapter of this Apostle's second Epistle: *For*, says he, *we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*, (that is, his second Coming, which he had been speaking of in the former Epistle) *but were eye-witnesses of his majesty*; and therefore have Reason to believe and assert, that he will appear in the like Majesty and Glory at the last Day. *For* at that time *he receiv'd from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice from the excellent Glory*,
(equal

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(equal to, if not exceeding, any Appearances of this Kind under the Law) *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice, which came from heaven, we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. i. e.* From what we then and there saw and heard, we are fully satisfied ourselves, and testify to others *the power and coming of our Lord,* according to the Pattern shew'd us in the Mount. But not to rest wholly upon this, though a lively Symbol and Representation of his future Appearance in Glory, *we have besides a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.* By the *more sure Word of Prophecy,* in this Place, we are to understand such Prophecies in Old and New Testament, as foretold our Saviour's second Coming and glorious Appearing. Such was the Prediction

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diction of our Lord himself in the twenty-fourth of *St. Matthew*, of which *St. Peter* was an Ear-witness; and such was the Prophecy or Testimony of the Angels that attended our Lord at his Ascension, where again this Apostle was present. Such was the Evidence which *St. Peter* had: He heard what *Christ* and the Angels foretold, and was *an Eye-witness of his Majesty*: And therefore, *first*, from the Testimony of his own Senses he intimates to the Christians he was writing to, that what he had before told them in relation to our Lord's second glorious Appearance, was neither *impossible* nor *improbable*. But for a fuller Satisfaction in this Case, he refers them to *Prophecy*, as a surer and firmer Foundation for their Faith and Hope to rest upon. But there was still one higher Degree of Assurance than this, which till they attain'd unto, they were to rest contented with what they could learn and collect

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collect from the Word of Prophecy in its more obvious or literal Sense and Meaning. And this higher Degree was attainable only by the Teaching and Interpretation of the Holy Ghost, as he intimates in these Words---*Until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts*; which implies not an *outward*, but an *inward* Evidence; not the actual Accomplishment of Prophecy, but the full Persuasion of its Accomplishment; and a clearer Knowledge of the Manner and Circumstances of it. Before we arrive at this higher Degree of Knowledge and Assurance, we are to believe in general the Certainty of the Things prophesied of, and to adhere to that Sense of the Prophecies, which, after the most diligent and impartial Enquiry, appears most probable, till we come to understand what further Views the Spirit might have, or what further Truths lie conceal'd in them; not doubting
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in the mean while, but that Promise of God by his Apostle will in time be made good to us---*If in any thing* (relating to the Subject of Prophecy, as well as other Matters) *ye be otherwise minded* for the present, *God shall reveal even this unto you.* Our Business in the mean time is to *take heed to the more sure word of prophecy, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place*; whereas *Types* and *Allegories*, as I observed before, are only a sort of *Darkness* in the midst of Light. *Types*, I say, are as *Shadows* that appear in the Light, or in the Day-time. The great *Types* or *Personages* under the Law, by which the *Messiah* was at different Times and in divers Manners foreshewn and represented, were such as shone with a distinguish'd Lustre, whose Characters are apparent and notorious, and whose Lives and Actions make up a great Part of the History of the Old Testament. So far they appear *in the Light*; but
then

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then under these Characters are seen some References and Resemblances to the *Great Antitype*, and these appear with a dusky or darker Aspect, and are the *Shadows*, not of themselves, but of him that was to come. And so again, the Law itself, in its *outward* Form and Service, is plain, open, and perspicuous, easily understood, and in Use, for a great part, among other Nations. But as *typically* prefiguring and representing the Office or Undertaking of the *Messiah*, its Design was more hidden and conceal'd: And this was the *shadowy* Part of the Law pointing to the Substance at the End of it. But now, on the other hand, *Prophecy is a Light that shineth in a dark place*: 'Tis dark round about, and the Truths or Events to be discover'd can be seen and view'd only in the Light of Prophecy; as will sufficiently appear, by considering only the *first* and *second* Advent of *Christ*; in both which respects

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spects we shall find that Saying of the Angel to St. *John* strictly verified---
The Testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy. God's Purpose and Promise to send his Son into the World for the Redemption of Mankind, and the Means and Method of their Redemption by his Humiliation and Sufferings, was all Mystery and Miracle, Darkness, Clouds, and thick Darkness. And nothing but the *more sure Word of Prophecy* could give Men any Light or Satisfaction in a Point so far beyond the Discovery of Reason, or the Reach of Human Comprehension. Then as to our Lord's *second* Coming in Glory to judge the World, this is as sure and certain, and yet as mysterious and incomprehensible by itself, or without the *Light of Prophecy*, as his first Coming in the Flesh, and what seems contrary to all the Notions and Expectations that Men could have from Reason or Experience. For that he who was *despised*

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spised and rejected of Men, that was brought himself before an earthly Tribunal, and there arraign'd and condemn'd, and then crucified as a Slave and Malefactor, shall be seen hereafter coming in the Clouds of Heaven, and sitting on the Throne of his Glory, and all Nations gather'd before him, to receive from him their final everlasting Doom: That he who was once the greatest Object of Scorn and Contempt, and thought not worthy to live upon Earth, shall appear at the last Day in terrible Pomp and Majesty, call the Dead out of their Graves, and sit in Judgment over Men and Angels: This, I say, is a Truth so bright and incontestable, but withal so astonishing and mysterious, that That which discovers and ascertains it to us, may well be compared to *a light shining in a dark place*, a Light surrounded with a sacred Horror. Now of this second Appearance of our Lord in Glory (so contrary to all
Hopes

Hopes and Expectations of any such thing, that could *naturally* arise from his first Visitation of us in great Humility) his Transfiguration on the Mount might be design'd as a *Pledge* and *Earnest*, and seems recommended by St. *Peter*, as such, to our Consideration. This, I say, he seems just to *mention* as one Ground of Faith, but he *insists* upon another; exhorting us particularly to take heed to the *more sure Word of Prophecy*; by the Help of which we may look into That within the Veil, discover some of the wonderful Mysteries and *Arcana* of Providence, that have been kept secret from the Foundation of the World, and behold the Things that are afar off, that long Series of extraordinary Events, that will most assuredly come to pass in the Latter Days.

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A LETTER

LETTER

To the REVEREND

Dr. B E R R I M A N,

Rector of *St. Mary Axe, London;*

CONTAINING

Some REMARKS on Dr. *Henry More's*
Exposition of the Seven Epistles to
the Seven Churches,

REVEREND SIR,

WHEN I was with you in *London,* you may remember that among other things relating to the Subject we were discoursing upon, you were pleased to mention and recommend to me Dr. *Henry More's Exposition of the Seven Epistles to the Seven Churches;* which I told you then, I had not seen. But having since got a Sight of that Book in *Octavo,* I have read it over with

Care and Attention; and shall here take the Liberty to give you my Sentiments of it, and to point out what I apprehend to be the principal Defects of his Scheme.

You are not to be inform'd that there are certain distinguishing Marks in Prophecy, and a peculiar Exactness in the Prophetick Stile, which I cannot think the learned Doctor has duly regarded. Nor do I suppose that he bestow'd much Time in the Composition, or allow'd himself sufficient Leisure for examining, comparing, and disposing the several Parts of the Prophetical Visions, which yet he frequently refers or alludes to. I find, he was not unacquainted with Mr. *Brightman's* Exposition of these Epistles, nor with Mr. *Mede's* Commentaries on the *Apocalypse*; and he observes that *P. Galatinus* had interpreted those seven Churches of seven Intervals of the Church from the Beginning to the End thereof (*Pref. p. 5.*) But it was only the Hint of a Gentleman in the Country (which he sets down at large in the *third Page* of his *Preface*) that seems to have put him upon undertaking this Work; which Hint he has for the most part follow'd throughout his Exposition, only varying from the Scheme of his Friend in his placing of the first Church, which he makes to commence with the *Christian Æra*, and to continue to *A. C. 63.* whereas that Gentleman extends that Church to *A. C. 110.* This was the Occasion of his writing the Exposition,
and

and by the Help of this friendly Intimation, as he tells us, he made a more quick Dispatch. Supposing therefore that it was wrote in some Haste, and while his Imagination was warm with the Scheme of his Friend, we cannot much wonder, if the whole be somewhat irregular, confused, and imperfect, and that we do not meet with that Accuracy and Judgment we might otherwise reasonably have expected from so able a Hand.

I do not propose to examine the whole, nor is there occasion. The few following Remarks will be sufficient to satisfy you, or any impartial Person, that his Exposition for the main is neither suited to the Prophecy, nor to the Times.

I. His Interpretation of the Names of several of the Churches appears to be very much strain'd and far-fetch'd. 'Tis a safe and general Rule, to prefer the plain, obvious, and primary Sense of Scripture-Expressions to any other, unless that primary Sense can be shewn to imply an Absurdity or Contradiction. Now I leave you to judge, whether the Construction of some of those Names which the Doctor, from the Strength of Imagination, or the Storehouse of Learning, has form'd to himself, be at all natural or rational. He seeks for the Meaning of *Greek* Words in the *Hebrew* Language: Nor is he content to give us sometimes very uncouth or improper Interpretations of the Names,

but

but upon this very weak and precarious Foundation he builds great part of his Exposition, and in one or two Instances enlarges more upon the Names of the Churches, than upon the whole Contents of the Epistle besides. You cannot but observe yourself, how idly for several Pages together the Doctor plays upon the Word *Thyatira*, which he has taken from Mr. *Brightman*, and substituted in the Place of *Thyatira*; and afterwards upon the Name *Sardis*, which he derives from *Sarda*, a precious Stone of strange Qualities, all which he enumerates and applies to the State of that Church; while other things of the greatest Moment he wholly omits, or but just mentions. See how copious he is on the Word *Antipas*, both in the Preface and Exposition, which he makes to be a Contraction of *Antipapas*, one against the Pope; and the Name of *Asia* he takes to be an *Hebrew* Allusion to the mystical Sense intended. P. 21.

2. The Doctor makes the Church of *Ephesus* to commence in the *mystical* Sense from the *Beginning* of Christianity, which is preposterous and absurd; because if these Epistles (as he interprets them, and has endeavour'd to prove) are *mystical* and *prophetical*, they cannot represent Things that were *past*. But St. *John* wrote the *Revelation*, as is generally allow'd, about *A. D.* 96; and therefore all that went before that must be left out. The Doctor himself was aware of this,
and

and owns that it seems improper to direct an Epistle to a Church *then out of Being*. p. 5. But then he attempts to solve the Difficulty by saying, that the prophetic Design of this Epistle was not intended for the *Ephesine* Church in the mystical Sense, but for future Ages; and therefore it is taken in only to make up the Entireness of the whole Succession of the Church in its several distinct States from the Beginning to the End of all. p. 8. In answer to which 'tis sufficient to observe, that these Epistles were design'd as *Instructions* to the seven Churches in their several Successions; but what Instruction could the Church of *Ephesus* receive by this Epistle, if that was *past* and *gone* before St. *John* began to write the *Revelation*? That which seems to have led Dr. *More* into this Opinion, is that Command of *Christ* to his Apostle, *Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter*, chap. i. 19. Where, as by *the things which are* is truly meant the present State of the several Churches, or the Beginning of the *Ephesine* Church in the larger and mystical Sense; so by *the things which thou hast seen*, the Doctor as well as others understand the State of the Church which was *past*. p. 4. Whereas these Words are partly interpreted thus by *Christ* himself in the next Verse—*The seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand*; and so may signify no more than what St. *John* had seen from ver. 12. to ver. 19. of that

that *Chapter*. In this Book he was to write the Apocalyptical Visions, that should be exhibited to him hereafter; but these he had not seen yet, or when he receiv'd this Command from *Christ* to write. He had only seen the Appearance of the Son of Man in a glorious Form, and the Representation of the seven Stars and the seven golden Candlesticks; and these he is commanded to write, as the things which he had then seen, and we find them written accordingly. And therefore we are not to look in the *Revelation* for *past* Events, or for an Account of the full State of the *first* Church before St. *John* began to write. All of this kind to be found there, is in the twelfth Chapter; but what is there related or represented (as I have shewn in my Exposition of that Chapter) happen'd as soon as, or before, St. *John* was born; and consequently cannot be denoted by *the things which THOU hast seen*.

3. The learned Doctor makes the ten Days Tribulation of the Church in *Smyrna* to be the ten general Persecutions; whereas *Days* in Scripture always and constantly signify either natural Days or Years; and therefore agreeably to the prophetick Language, I have expounded the *ten Days* Tribulation, not of ten general Persecutions, but of the *tenth* or last of those Persecutions, which continued just *ten* Years. Now by these two Errors only, you may see what Confusion, Disorder, and Dislocations are made in the History

History of the Church, as prophetically represented in the *Apocalypse*, and particularly in the Seven Epistles: For here *Ephesus* is placed where no Church is to be found in the Epistles, and *Smyrna* is put in the place of *Ephesus*. And how is it possible then that the Historical Characters should agree with the Prophetick Description? Though these two Churches, both as to Prophecy and History, being parallel in several Circumstances, the Error here is not near so considerable as what follows in the Account of the succeeding Churches.

4. The Doctor makes the Period of the Church in *Pergamus* to be no less than 938 Years, and so after the mention of *Constantine* at the Beginning he takes a large Stride, and hastens to his favourite Topick, the Growth and Prevalence of *Popery*, for the sake of which he leaves out the whole *Arian* Contróversy, and an Account of all the glorious Martyrs under the *Arian* Persecution, and almost all that follow'd to the Time of the *Waldenses*; all which include a Space of not much less than 800 Years.

5. He assigns no distinct Period to any of the four remaining Churches, which renders the Whole uncertain and insignificant. For to what End should he undertake to expound these Epistles in a *mystical* and *prophetical* Sense, but to shew the successive Connection between the Prophecy and the History? and how can that be done without fixing and determining

termining the several distinct States or Periods of the Churches? for want of which he strangely misplaces and confounds historical Events, and puts things together that are at a wide Distance from one another. Thus he makes *Antipas* under the Church in *Pergamus* (which plainly points at the Martyrs under the *Arian* Persecution, and *Athanasius* at the Head of them) to be the same with the *Waldenses* and *Albigenses* (*Pref.* p. 16. *Expos.* p. 84.) Thus again he supposes the holy Martyrs of our Reform'd Religion to be denoted by the *Thyatirians* (p. 86.) that existed several Ages before, and are to be sought for at the Beginning or first Rise of Popery, when the spiritual *Jezebel* was FIRST suffer'd to seduce the Servants of *Christ* to commit Fornication (*Rev.* ii. 20.) And then he imagines the general Resurrection and Judgment will follow immediately upon the Conclusion of the Church in *Laodicea*, p. 161. and so considers that Church not only as the last, but in such a manner as if nothing were to intervene between that and Judgment: Whereas it may appear from what I have endeavour'd to shew, that the Completion of almost all the Prophecies in the *Revelation* is to take place not till *after* the Expiration of the *Laodicean* State.

6. The Doctor seems to imagine that the pouring out of the Vials will be finish'd before the Commencement of the *Philadelphian* State, (See *Pref.* p. 37. *Expos.* p. 107,

125, 127, 129, 133, 134.) contrary to the plain Drift and orderly Position of the *Apocalyptical* Visions, and the general Sense of Expositors. And I cannot but particularly observe, that though the learned Doctor does not distinguish the four last Churches, *as to Time*; yet he makes a Distinction between them according to the *seven Thunders*, (p. 125, 139, 140.) which are made no distinguishing Marks in the *Apocalypse*, nor do they seem to be at any great Distance from one another, as the Opening of the Seals and the Sounding of the Trumpets plainly are; and what they utter'd St. *John* is forbid to write.

7. The Doctor, supposing the *Laodicean* Church to be the *last* Scene of Providence, and that soon after this will come the Judgment, (p. 148, 149.) takes care accordingly to bring almost all the Prophecies into Accomplishment beforehand. This, though the last of his Exposition, I take to be the first Error that led him into all the rest: For, looking for nothing *after* or *beyond* this Church, he has crowded into other States or Churches what is properly to succeed the *Laodicean* State, even most of those many and marvellous Events, that are to come to pass a little before the End of the World.

I only add, that in his *Recapitulation*, chap. 10, allowing for his mistiming and misplacing some things, the Arguments he uses for the *mystical* and *prophetical* Sense of the

the seven Epistles, are, for the most part, sound and strong.

I designed to have ended here, but finding that the Doctor had been conversant in the Writings of Mr. *Brightman*, and that he approv'd of some Part of his *Exposition*, I was willing to see how far he had follow'd the Method of that Expositor. The Result of my Enquiry I shall here set down, by which the Defects of both Schemes may appear at one View.

Now the distinct Periods of the seven Churches or States of Christianity, according to Mr. *Brightman*, are as follow. 1. *Ephesus*, from the Preaching of the Apostles to the Reign of *Constantine the Great*, p. 40.— 2. *Smyrna*, from *Constantine* to *Gratian*, A. D. 382, p. 57.— 3. *Pergamus*, from about 380 to 1300, p. 64.— 4. *Thyatira*, from 1300 to 1520, p. 75.— 5. *Sardis*, commencing about 1517, i. e. at the Beginning of *Martin Luther's* Preaching, p. 91.— 6. *Philadelphia* is made to commence at or near the same time, viz. at the Preaching of *Zuinglius* at *Zurich*, An. 1519 or 1523, p. 109.— 7. *Laodicea* he makes to be the Church of *England*, and calls the third Reform'd Church, more pure than the others in Doctrine, but different in Government; and the Beginning of this he reckons from King *Edward VI.* in the Year 1547, p. 125. The other two he makes to differ, as they retain'd or rejected the Error of *Consubstantiation*.

Here

Here then we may discover the Grounds of all Mr. *Brightman's* Inveteracy against the Bishops and Clergy of the Church of *England*, namely, his looking upon that Church as particularly foreshewn and clearly represented by the Church in *Laodicea*, and himself as living in the *Laodicean Age*: Upon which account he bestows all the bad Character given by our Saviour to that degenerate Church, upon the first pure and happy Re-form'd Church of *England*. See here where a blind Zeal will lead a Man, and what Principles and Tempers may be the Consequence of a wrong Interpretation of Prophecy! To bring this about, the Author has been forced to quit his former Method, and to go a quite contrary way. The three first Churches he considers in a Line of Succession, though the Periods he assigns are far from being agreeable to the Truth of the Prophecy. But still he makes them to succeed one another, and one to begin where the other ends; but here he makes three Churches cotemporary, and distinguishable only by a Difference in Doctrine, or Diversity of Government; which no one, I believe, beside, before or since, ever thought of. Nor is there any reason to be given, why the four first States of the Church should be *successive*, and the three last *cotemporary*. But this Expositor had so out-run himself in the long Period he had assign'd to the Church in *Pergamus* of a thousand Years, (in which he is followed by

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Dr. *More*) that afterwards to make up the Number, he forms three Churches out of one. For that State of Christianity which is implied and comprehended under the Name of the *Protestant* or *Reform'd* Churches, was ever look'd upon but as one Church or State, according to the *mystical* Sense of the seven Epistles. But this Mr. *Brightman* has divided into three distinct Churches; nor will he allow them, as he did the former, to follow one another in a regular successive Order, but treats of them as subsisting together at one and the same Time. Besides, by a very odd Turn of Thought, he considers the three first Churches, which are so particularly commended by our Saviour, as in a State of declining to the worse, and the other four (two of which are represented as very degenerate and corrupt) in a State of ascending or returning to the better. (See his *Analysis*, p. 37.) But yet notwithstanding all this Error and Confusion, we must allow that he was the *first English Divine* that pointed out the right way of interpreting the seven Epistles, or that they are to be understood not barely in a *literal* and *historical*, but in a *mystical* and *prophetical* Sense; and though he did not himself, nor Dr. *More* after him, hit upon the right Method of applying the sevenfold State of the Church to particular Times and Periods, this should not discourage, but rather incite and provoke us to endeavour to adjust and assign the proper and respective Intervals

Intervals of the several Churches or different States of Christianity. And this is what I attempted to do in my *View of the Seven Churches in Asia*. How well I have succeeded in that Attempt, must be left to the Judgment of others.

I remember indeed, in our Discourse on this Subject, you were pleased to intimate, that all I had offer'd in this way to publick View might be only *conjectural*. It might be so. But when I assure you, that I had no particular Scheme or *Hypothesis* to serve, that all along I had the strictest Regard to the natural Construction and Connection of the Text and Context; that I went upon this solid Principle, (which I think is very easily demonstrable) that the seven Epistles are *truly prophetical*, and clearly significative of a sevenfold State of *Christ's Church* upon Earth; and that after this Discovery I had nothing farther to do, than to find out the Beginning and Ending of each Church, and proper Matter in History to answer the several Descriptions in Prophecy; and that the Correspondency between these appear'd to me very plain and perspicuous, and far beyond Expectation, and still more and more so, as I proceeded in my Enquiry; and when I aver moreover, that all this was afterwards farther confirm'd to me by some other Passages in Scripture, particularly that of *St. Paul's Panoply*, and by Part of our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount: When you hear me, I say, seriously affirm-

✱ A LETTER to the

ing all this, you may at last be inclin'd to think, that my Exposition is not the Fruit of mere Fancy or Conjecture, but that it has something of Truth and Certainty for its Foundation. To incline you the more to such a Thought, let me observe, that the whole *Revelation* is call'd a Book of Prophecy, or *the Words of this Prophecy*, ch. i. 3. and is a Representation of *things to come*, either in the Form of an History, or in the way of Vision, or by direct and positive Prediction. The State of the Church in the several Ages of the World, from the Times of the Apostles to the Coming of *Antichrist*, being one continued Succession of Events in the more common and ordinary Course of Things, and only divided into seven Parts or Periods, according to the predominant Character of each Church, is set forth by our Saviour in a familiar epistolary Way, and under the Form of a regular History: But the more signal and solemn Judgments of God, and those extraordinary Revolutions that will be brought to pass in the *latter Days*, being wholly separate from and independent of one another, are represented in so many distinct Visions, or in a way of propheticall Warning. And the Reason why our Saviour chose to have his Church represented in this Book, not from the *Beginning of Christianity*, but from the *End of the Apostolick Age*, seems plainly to be this, that while the Apostles were living, the Church was only in building

building or planting, and not finish'd or compleat: And it would have been incongruous in a Visionary Scheme or Divine *Drama* (as the *Apocalypse* is generally allow'd to be) to exhibit the State of the Church in its naked Foundation, or before the Apostles had fully discharg'd their great Trust, in propagating the Faith, settling of Churches and Pastors, and finishing the Writings that were to constitute and make up the *Canon* of the New Testament. These laid the Foundation not only of the *first*, but of *all* the seven Churches; and each of these seven is set forth in *Christ's* Epistles, not as it was in the Foundation, or upon the first Reception of the Gospel, but as carried to its just Height and full Extent; and therefore the *first compleat Church*, which is describ'd in *Christ's* first Epistle, is to be look'd for *after* the Death of the Apostle St. *John*: And then the End of this Church and the Beginning of the next are most plainly denoted by our Saviour's Warning to the *Smyrneans* of a Tribulation for *ten Days*, which, as I have shewn, can signify nothing so properly as the *Dioclesian* Persecution, which lasted ten Years and some Months, and was the full Period of the *Smyranean* State; and this leads us directly to the third glorious State of the Church, the Establishment of Christianity by Human Laws under *Constantine the Great*, very fitly and evidently figur'd out to us in the Name of *Pergamus*, a Tower upon a Hill, lofty and conspicuous;

(b 3)

though

though Mr. *Brightman* and Dr. *More* after him, extending their Views far beyond the Design of the Epistle to that Church, and taking in withal the Periods belonging to the Churches in *Thyatira* and *Sardis*, have represented this Church (so peculiarly dignified and distinguish'd by our Saviour) under the odious Characters of *proud* and *vain-glorious*, *ambitious* and *aspiring*.

Now any Reader, observing this Rule or Method of Interpretation, may readily discover the several different Periods or States of Christianity, which are so particularly describ'd in the Epistles to the seven Churches, and either follow the Account which I have given of the same, or form one to himself that he thinks more agreeable to History and Prophecy. Only let him remember, that that Interpretation cannot be the right, which does not strictly maintain a perfect Agreement, in every respect, between the Prediction and the supposed Accomplishment, or that is not able to find out Events in such an Age answering to the Contents of such an Epistle, or fairly and fully reconcilable to the Words of Prophecy. By some such Marks or Tests as these, every Attempt of this kind is to be tried.

Lastly, as to your Objection, that the Character I had given of the Church in *Philadelphia* was such as you thought could not properly be applied to the main Body of *Protestants* after the Reformation, I cannot but

but think on the contrary, that that great and glorious Work, which was the direct and immediate Work of Providence, deserves a more favourable Opinion, and even the highest Commendation, notwithstanding some Exceptions to the general Character, which are overlook'd by our Saviour, as the many Heresies of the Primitive Times are on the same account, in the Characters given of the Churches in *Ephesus* and *Smyrna*.

I shall now conclude with acquainting you, that the Delays and Discouragements I have met with in publishing the two Volumes propos'd, have been partly owing to the Badness of the Times, and partly to some other unlucky Incidents. It is well known that I was not of Ability to print such a Work at my own Expence; and as the Uncommonness and Obscurity of the Subject deterr'd the Booksellers from undertaking it, so the same Reason hinder'd many from subscribing to it, and others that were willing to encourage the Work pleaded the Difficulty of the Times: But the greatest Obstacle perhaps in my way, was a violent Prejudice which the Generality of the Clergy of this Diocese had taken up against *Subscriptions in general*, on account of their being disappointed of a Volume of Sermons of the late Reverend Mr. *Fisher*, which many of them had subscrib'd for three Years ago, and which is not yet published; and they would not venture a *second* Disappointment. But this

that has been a Hindrance to me in one respect, has proved of Advantage in another, as it has afforded me an Opportunity of making some necessary Enlargements, and of adding this Epistle to the rest, which may help to remove some Obstructions, and to prepare the Way for the clearer understanding the true State of the Seven Churches. I am,

S I R,

With great Respect,

Your Faithful

TORRINGTON,

Aug. 5, 1741.

Humble Servant,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

BRIEF

[19]

BRIEF
OBSERVATIONS

On the LEARNED

Mr. M E D E's

CLAVIS APOCALYPTICA,

AND

On some few Passages in his other
Apocalyptical WRITINGS.

IN the Preface to the Second Volume, I had made, as I hoped, a sufficient Apology for opposing and dissenting from this Great Man; but considering since how many Admirers and Followers he has all along had, and has still at this Time, and that *his* Hypothesis is generally look'd upon as the Standard of Orthodoxy in these Points, I was willing to be a little more particular. And had I not thought this necessary for opening and clearing the Way, I should very gladly have pass'd over all which that very learned
Author

Author has advanced on the other Side. But the Love of Truth, and a Desire to convince and satisfy the sober Enquirer, were the Motives to my undertaking this ungrateful Task: And I trust that my Labour will not be altogether in vain. When Men see and are sensible that Mr. Mede's Scheme is clogg'd with insuperable Difficulties, and really inconsistent with the general Design of the Prophetic Spirit in the *Revelation*, it may then be presumed that they will be inclined to give the *literal* Interpreters of the *Apocalyptical* Visions and Prophecies a more favourable Hearing.

'Twas Mr. Mede's great Unhappiness, in pursuing the *mystical* Sense, to confound *Antichrist* with the Whore of *Babylon*, or to mistake one for the other; whereby it has come to pass, that his very learned Writings on this mysterious Subject do generally abound with false Synchronisms, forced Interpretations, and improper or defective Applications to Things and Persons; as has been partly shewn in the Second Volume, and may more fully appear from the following Observations.

SYNCHRON. I. p. 419, 420.

1. Of the Woman in the Wilderness.
2. Of the seven-headed Beast restored.
3. Of the outward Court trodden down by the Gentiles.
4. The Witnesses on Earth prophesying in Sackcloth.

The first of these I have shewn to be wrong in my Exposition of the twelfth Chapter; but the other Three cotemporate in general. This Synchronism Mr. *Mede* draws from the mention of *parallel Times*, though he allows himself that *equal Times* are not always *synchronal*. And it was afterwards objected to him by Mr. *Osborn*, p. 788, that though the Expressions in St. *John* be the same with those in *Daniel*, yet the Time and Things prophesied of may not be the same: To which Mr. *Mede* made then no direct Answer.

The Beast and the Witnesses he supposes to begin together, and to be all along cotemporary, which is manifestly wrong; for how then could the Beast kill the Witnesses and survive them? His Error in this respect might proceed from supposing the third Woe to be the same as the seventh Trumpet, and that this sounded immediately after the Earthquake, which he rightly concludes to be the second Woe; but then he might as reasonably have concluded, that there must be some Space or Interval between the second and
third

third Woe; and whatever that Space be, since the Witnesses were killed, rose, and ascended before the Coming of the second Woe, and Antichrist he allows is not to be destroy'd before the Time of the third Woe, or the sounding of the seventh Trumpet, (see p. 714.) they could not possibly be all along cotemporary, though they were partly so, and each is to fulfil an equal Space of Time: But one will begin before the other, as may be gather'd from these Words, *ch. xi. 7. And when they shall have finish'd their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them and kill them.* From which Passage it seems pretty evident that the Witnesses will *begin* their Ministry *before* Antichrist begins his Reign properly so called, and even almost finish their Work before he shall arrive to his full Power.

I have nothing to object to his Synchronism of the two Witnesses and the outward Court; but may observe, that if the Witnesses be only *single Persons*, and their Continuance be truly and literally no longer than *three Years and a half*, which was the general Opinion of the Antients, (see Dr. Wells on *Rev. xi. 3.*) then the treading down of the outward Court can relate only or chiefly to the *latter Days*, as the Time of the Witnesses prophesying.

SYNCHRON. II. p. 420, 421.

Of the two-horned Beast (the same as the false Prophet) with the ten-horned Beast, that is called likewise the Image of the Beast.

Under this Head Mr. *Mede* has fallen into divers Errors: As, 1. He affirms the two-horned Beast to be the Restorer or Curer of the Wound of the seven-headed Beast; when this is so far from being asserted or insinuated in the *Revelation*, that on the contrary we find the two-horned Beast did not arise or appear in the World, till some time after the other Beast or Antichrist had received his deadly Wound, and been healed. (Compare *Rev. xiii. 3.* with *ver. 11.*) 2. He confounds the five Kings mention'd *chap. xvii.* with five of the Heads of the Beast; for he says, when *five Heads are fallen*, referring at the same time to *ch. xvii.* whereas 'tis there only said, that five of the seven *Kings* were fallen, *i. e.* before St. *John's* Time. The seven *Heads* in the Verse before are altogether distinct, and expressly declared by the Angel to denote seven *Mountains*, and cannot therefore at the same time signify seven *Kings*. This Error, which is often repeated, seems to have been occasion'd by his connecting the Words in the Beginning of the tenth Verse with the *seven Heads* in the ninth Verse; for so he expressly joins them together, as thus—*De Septem Capitibus dicitur, SEPTEM CAPITA*
SUNT

SUNT SEPTEM REGES, Βασίλεις ἑπτὰ ἑσσι, p. 557. whereas all that relates to the *seven Heads* ends with the ninth Verse; and what follows is a different and distinct Subject. And this would appear more clearly, if the first Words were render'd, as they might be, *There are also seven Kings*. But *Kings* and *Mountains* are inconsistent Ideas, and not likely to be signified at the same time, by one and the same Expression. Mr. Mede has much the same Assertion, p. 911. where not distrusting in the least the Truth of his Construction, viz. that the *seven Heads* are *seven Kings*, he proceeds to interpret them of seven chief Powers of the *Roman Commonwealth*, as *Consuls, Tribunes, Dictators, &c.* But had this been the Meaning, it is most likely that the Order of the Words would have been inverted, and it would have been said, not that *seven Heads* are *seven Kings*, but that *seven Kings* are *seven Heads*, or chief Powers. *Heads* is a general Term, and may be variously expounded; but when these are applied to one particular Branch of Power, viz. that of *Kings*, 'tis strange he should seek for any other Sense of that Word in this Place, or think that it could be otherwise understood, than as it is expounded by the Angel.

3. Mr. Mede strangely confounds the Image of the Beast with the Beast himself, and that perhaps because the worshipping of the Image of the Beast, as separate and distinct from the Beast, is no way reconcileable to his Hypothesis.

thesis of a *mystical* Antichrist. However, at last he seems to be aware that this Opinion is not defensible, and therefore insists no further upon it, especially as he thinks the *Synchronism* of the Beasts is not affected by it.

SYNCHRON. III. p. 422.

Of the Great Whore, or Mystical Babylon, with the Beast of seven Heads and ten Horns.

In this *Synchronism* Mr. Mede seems to be much perplexed. In another Place he asserts the Pope to be the two-horned Beast or false Prophet, (see p. 505.) and both he and almost all Expositors allow the Whore of *Babylon* to signify the Church of *Rome*; and what then can the Beast with ten Horns be, in the *mystical* way? According to that Hypothesis, Antichrist must be either the Pope, or the *Church of Rome*: If the former, then the two-horned Beast or false Prophet, and the ten-horned Beast, signify one and the same: If the latter, then the Beast with ten Horns, and the Whore of *Babylon*, are the same, which yet Mr. Mede makes distinct and cotemporary. 2. He confounds the Beast that carries the Woman with the Beast that hates her, and that is to make her desolate, and to burn her with fire; whereas the first is no other than the Dragon mention'd *ch. xii.* 3. For though he be there call'd *Dragon*, and here *Beast*, yet they may be easily known to be the same, by the bloody Colours in which they

they are described, the one being stiled the Great *Red Dragon*, the other the *Scarlet-colour'd Beast*. But the other Beast, that with ten confederate Kings is to fight against the Woman, and to make her *desolate* and *naked*, can be neither the *Dragon*, nor *mystical Babylon*. The former is too absurd to imagine, and the latter implies a Contradiction; for that would make the Beast to fight against himself, and the Power overcoming and overcome to be the same. And this is one Argument made use of by the *literal* Expositors, to prove that the Beast or *Antichrist*, and the Whore of *Babylon* or *Rome* are distinct, *namely*, because one is to be destroy'd by the other, *ch. xvii. 16, 17.*

SYNCHRON. VI. p. 423.

Of measuring the Inward Court, and of the Design of the seven-headed Dragon, and of his Fight with Michael about the Man-child that should be born.

In this there seems to be no more *Synchronism*, than there was in the Birth of *Christ*, and *Herod's* Attempt to destroy the Divine Infant, and of the Wilderness-State of Christians for the three first Centuries: For that this is the true Meaning of the Woman in Travail, and of the Fight of *Michael* with the Dragon, I have shewn in my Exposition on the twelfth Chapter. Then as to the *Measure of the inward Court*, this he makes else-
where

where to be the Conformity of the Primitive Church to the Rule of God's Word, and the After-Ages to be denoted by the outward Court, that was cast out, and not to be measured, as not answering the original Pattern; for which he refers to *Ezek. xliii. 7—10*, and says that whoever shall attempt to expound the Words to any other Sense, will find no Example of any such Interpretation in Scripture. P. 478, 479. In another Place he expresses himself thus — “ By the *Inmost* or “ *measured Court of the Temple*, I understand “ the Church in her primitive Purity, when “ as yet the Christian Worship was unprofane’d, and answerable to the Divine Rule “ revealed from above. P. 920. By the Second or *Outward Court trampled by the “ Gentiles, and not to be measured*, ch. xi. 1, 2, “ I understand the *Apostasy under the Man of “ Sin*, when the visible Church, being possessed by Idolaters and Idolatry like that “ of the *Gentiles*, became so inconformable “ and unapt for the Divine Measure; that it “ was to be cast out, and accounted as profane and polluted: For the *Apostasy* of the “ Church is *Ethnicismus Christianus*.” P. 921. Now from these Words I argue thus — If the *Inward Court* may justly be thought, according to Mr. Medé, to denote the *first* and *purest* Part of the Church of *Christ*, why may not the *Outward Court* be intended to signify and represent the *last* and *most degenerate* State of the Church? For that all the *middle*

Ages of the Church, or from the Time of *Constantine* to the present Time, should be given to the *Gentiles* to be trampled upon and accounted *profane*, is neither agreeable to the Words of the Prophecy, nor to the Event in History. For can the Church at any time be called the *Court without the Temple*? Have there not been sound and sincere Christians in every Age? And these, whether more or less, were the *visible Church of Christ*. But this Expression most exactly suits the *Antichristian State*, when there will be hardly any Appearance of a *Christian Church* upon Earth, but all will be Deformation, Confusion, and Profanation. Our Blessed Saviour in his Epistles has signified, that there will be *but seven Churches*, or seven States of the *Catholick Church*, the last of which is the *Laodicean*: What follows he does not vouchsafe so much as to call by the Name of a *Church*. Not but that there will be many eminent Christians and glorious Martyrs in those Days: But then the Church itself will scarce be visible, but like a City taken and plunder'd, and razed to the Ground. The *inward* and *outward Court* then, which are distant in *Place* from one another, may likewise here be mystically consider'd as distant in *Time*, or as answering the two opposite Extremes of *First* and *Last*. And this is no other than what Mr. Mede himself allows in this very *Synchronism*, and gives us an Instance of it in the Image of *Nebuchadnezzar*, in which, he says, the Order

der of Position or Situation denoted the Order of Time.

Lastly, He has likewise rightly observ'd, that in the twelfth Chapter St. *John* begins afresh, and repeats things *ab ovo*; for what is there exhibited *precedes* and is more antient than all the rest. But after he had discover'd this, 'tis somewhat strange that he should look upon the Contents of the next Chapter as immediately succeeding; when there is really as much Difference and Distance between them, as between the *first* and *second* Advent of *Christ*. And the only Reason why St. *John* placed them together, or one just after the other, seems to be, that he might bring under one View, two the greatest Opposites or Extremes.

SYNCHRON. VII. p. 424.

Of the Seven Vials, with the declining State of the Beast and Babylon.

But the Pouring out of the Vials cannot *synchronize* with Both; for *Babylon* will be destroy'd by the Beast, *ch.* xvii. and the Vials will not be poured out till after the Destruction of *Babylon*, being the several fatal Steps that, like the Plagues in *Egypt*, are to bring about or prepare the way for the utter Ruin of Antichrist.

Of the S E A L S.

Against applying the *Seals* to the Time of the *Roman* Emperors, as Mr. *Mede* has done at large, there lie these just Exceptions.

1. If the *Seals* related principally to those Times, there would then be a Repetition or a twofold Application to the same Periods, viz. that of the *Seals*, and that of the Seven Epistles of *Christ* to the Churches in *Asia*; for that these represent the several States of *Christendom* through all the Successions of *Heathen* and *Popish Rome*, from the Days of the Apostles to the Coming of Antichrist, I have, I hope, sufficiently made appear, and that too from much plainer Marks and Characters, than have been produced for the other Interpretation. 2. Since the *Seals* denote something *hidden* or concealed from common Observation, or some *mystical* Meaning in some common and ordinary Events, and the opening of these *Seals* can signify no less than the Discovery and bringing to Light what otherwise could never have been known; and since none was found worthy to open these *Seals* but the *Lamb* or Son of God himself; it may justly be presumed that the Events design'd to be foreshewn thereby are not such common and ordinary ones, or so visible and apparent at first sight, as every Person versed in History shall be able presently to descry and depend upon. For, 3. To come to Particulars—The Contents of the *first Seal*, as inter-

interpreted by the Moderns, relate not only to Things that are *past*, but such Things as happen'd even *before* the Time of St. *John's* writing the *Revelation*, which is no mean Objection against this sort of Exposition; since the Book of *Revelation* is a Book of *Prophecy*, and the Seals in particular contain Things not before revealed. To apply the first Seal therefore to *Christ's* Victory in planting and propagating the Gospel by his Apostles, is to expound an abstruse and mysterious Prophecy by an Event that was *past* before the Prophecy was given, and that too the most *open* and *notorious*, that was visible and apparent to all the World; for such was the Propagation and Progress of Christianity, and as such no fit Contents of a *sealed Book*. 2dly, The next Seal is applied to the Reigns of *Trajan* and *Adrian*, for two Reasons; first, because of the *Western* Quarter the former came from; for Mr. *Mede* founds his Interpretation of this Seal upon the encamping of the four Standards of the *Israelites* in the Wilderness, three Tribes to a Standard, to the four Quarters of Heaven; so that the first Seal is made to come from the *East*, the second from the *West*, &c. (See p. 437, 442.) But all this is precarious, and may be only conjectural. The second Reason given for applying this Seal to the Reigns of *Trajan* and *Adrian*, is the bloody Wars that raged about that Time, and the vast Destruction of the *Jews* by those two Emperors, answer-

ing to the Colour of the Horse, and the Character of the Rider. But were there no other remarkable Wars in the *Roman* Empire *before* or *after* that Period? One can hardly believe, that so common a Case as a raging and devouring War, if that were *all* that was implied in this Seal, should be particularly mark'd out by so distinguishing a Prophecy. And what is there to distinguish this War, so signally foretold and pointed at, from any other War, but the Completion of the *preceding* and *subsequent* Seals, which 'twill be no easy matter to prove to be *past*? The Event supposed to belong to the former I have above shewn to be improper and insufficient: And that of the latter answers no better. This *third* Seal is allow'd by most Expositors to signify *Famine*: But Mr. *Mede* finding nothing in History about that Time answering to this, has out of his abundant Ingenuity (which is seldom at a loss for Applications) converted a Scarcity of Corn and Wine into a Strictness and Severity of Justice, as administer'd by the Emperor *Severus*, p. 443, 444. But neither is this Hold tenable; the next Seal will drive him out of it: For That repeats the two former Judgments foretold by the two Seals, *viz.* *Sword* and *Famine*, and that too in the same Order in which they are foretold; and these, with the Addition of two more, *Pestilence* and *Wild Beasts*, make up the Judgment of the *fourth* Seal.—The *fifth* Seal, as understood of the tenth and last
general

general Persecution, has the greatest Appearance of Truth; but even That was but a Type or Figure of what will happen in the Days of Antichrist; and we are not to chuse an Interpretation that seems fairly to account for two or three of the Seals, but leaves the rest in the dark, but such a one as extends to all alike, and shews their Agreement and Consistency with each other.—The Exposition of the *sixth* Seal I may justly except against, because 'tis all turn'd into *Metaphor*, and for no other Reason but because the same Expressions are used by the old Prophets in a *metaphorical* Sense, and because some things are found in History answerable thereto. But Interpreters should first try and examine whether the Words they are going to expound will bear a *literal* Construction, which is generally preferable to any other: But Men come to the Examination of this Book prejudiced with a Notion that all therein contain'd is *Allegory*, *Type*, and *Mystery*; which Notion or Prepossession of theirs has made them overlook some of the plainest Truths in that Book. That which is really Mystical and Prophetical (as *Christ's* Epistles to the seven Churches certainly are) they understand only in the plain Historical Sense; and that which is historically true, is turn'd into *Mystery*. Thus in the next Chapter, the Account of the Number of the Sealed out of the twelve Tribes of *Israel*, which is so clear a Description and so bright a Prophecy of the ge-

neral Conversion of the *Jews* in the latter Days, is wholly applied by Expositors either to the *Gentile* Christian Church, or to the Conversion of the *Jews* in the Days of the Apostles. Besides, Mr. Mede seems to confound the Company of the Sealed with the Virgin-Company, *ch. xiv.* for so I understand those Words of his, *Bis ponitur Signatorum Visio*, p. 453. and then refers to that Chapter, where he says the Virgin-Company are commended for their Integrity, when the rest of the World apostatiz'd; which is very true of the Faithful in the middle Ages of the Church and towards the Dawn of the Reformation, but no other way applicable to the Company of the Sealed, than as the Number of both is the same; which only shews that that Number is *mystical*, and applicable to the *Gentile* as well as *Jewish* Converts. But he supposes a Conversion of the *Gentiles* preceding the general Conversion of the *Jews*, which he argues from St. James's Application of a Passage of the Prophet *Amos* in the Council at *Jerusalem*, Acts xv. and therefore expounds the Sealing of the twelve Tribes of that previous Conversion of the *Gentiles*. The first may be very true, and yet not to the purpose. There will be a Fulness of the *Gentiles* before the *Jews* are converted, and another Fulness after their Conversion; which may be distinguish'd into *Ordinary* and *Extraordinary*. The former is not taken notice of in the *Revelation*, but only

only the latter, and that just after the Conversion of the *Jews* in this Chapter, and we have likewise an Intimation of the same, *ch. xvi. 12*. But that Mr. *Mede* again strangely interprets of the Conversion of the *Jews*; thus seeking for it where it is not to be found, and overlooking it where it is. But to proceed now to other Particulars—And here I shall be much shorter.

Pag. 479. Mr. *Mede* supposes the *Outward Court*, and the *Holy City* to be trodden down of the *Gentiles*, as mention'd by *St. Luke*, to be explanatory of each other; whereas I take these to be so far distinct, that the *Outward Court* denotes the *Gentile Christian Church* in the last Days, and the *Holy City*, *Jerusalem* properly so call'd, which after the Conversion of the *Jews* will be rebuilt, and then seized and taken possession of by *Antichrist*.

P. 481. He makes the Two Witnesses to allude to the three illustrious Pairs under the Old Testament, *Moses* and *Aaron*, *Elias* and *Elisha*, *Zerobabel* and *Jeshua*; to whom he might have added *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*: and since these are all single Persons, and consider'd as Types of the Two Witnesses, 'tis but reasonable to conclude that the Witnesses themselves, agreeably to the Allusion and to the Sense of the Antients, should have been interpreted by him as single Persons, and not as a Multitude: But this was inconsistent with his Hypothesis.

P. 482, &c. (to which may be added p. 507, 508, &c.) For the same Reason he makes every thing relating to these two Witnesses to be wholly *mystical*, but with much Force and Straining. The Speaking of the Image, and the Killing of them that refuse to worship it, he expounds in so confused and obscure a manner, that a Man must be greatly prejudiced that can assent to such Reasons and Arguments. The Marks, the Name, and the Number of the Beast is explain'd in much the same way; and among all other Names for that mystical Number 666, he makes choice of that which best suits his Design, and that is *Lateinus*, though he could not be ignorant that *Irenæus*, who mentions this as probable, prefers another Name as much more probable, which is *Teitan*, p. 509, 510. The Fire coming down out of Heaven he supposes to be no other than either a proverbial Speech in use among the *Jews*, who liken all portentous things to the Fire of *Elias*, or the Thunder of Excommunication; in proof of which he seems to offer Violence to some plain Texts of Scripture; and by the same Metaphor he endeavours to account for the Prohibition to *buy* and *sell*, p. 508. The Beast's making War with the Witnesses and overcoming them, he applies to the Primitive Protestants, or to the Beginning of the Reformation. But those Protestants were never wholly extirpated, extinguished, or destroyed, being (as it were) the Seed,

Seed, First-fruits and Forerunners of the whole Body of sound Christians in the several Reformed Churches; whereas the Two Witnesses are to be killed, and left dead in the open Streets for three Days and a half; which there is nothing in the *mystical* Acceptation to answer or represent. Nor can the *mystick* Expounders of this Scene agree among themselves about the Time of its Completion.

P. 484. Mr. *Mede* affirms that the Resurrection of the Witnesses must be taken *analogically*, and consequently their Death, because there is no proper Resurrection before the second Advent of *Christ* under the seventh Trumpet. But he knew very well, that, according to the general Opinion of the Primitive Writers, *Enoch* and *Elias* are the Two Witnesses pointed at in that Passage of *St. John*; and as these were exempted from the *common Death of all Men*, so now after Death they may *prevent them that are asleep*, and be raised before the *common Season of the Resurrection*. What Mr. *Mede* affirms in this Case is *gratis dictum*, and can never be proved, no more than what he affirms afterwards, *namely*, that as there was no *Jerusalem* when *St. John* wrote the *Revelation*, so neither will there be any besides or hereafter, which may be called the *Great City*, which he says throughout the *Revelation* denotes *Rome*, that is, *according to his own Interpretation*. But this is a little too presumptuous
for

for any Person to assert, especially considering the distinguishing Note given of that City in the same Place, *viz.* ch. xi. 8. And it must be owing only to Prejudice (as Dr. *Wells* observes on *Rev.* xvii. 18.) that the *Great City* mention'd ch. xi. viii. and describ'd to be that *where our Lord was crucified*, should be thought by any not to be *Jerusalem*, since the Description of it, *viz.* *where our Lord was crucified*, is as particularly applicable to *Jerusalem*, as the other chap. xvii. 18. *which reigns over the Kings of the Earth*, is to *Rome*.

P. 485. He is much puzzled about the Word *πλατῖα*, which is easy and obvious in the *literal* Sense, as signifying the Street by way of Eminence, or the chief Street of *Jerusalem*; but in the *mystical* way indeed 'tis hard to make any Sense of it. However, understanding nothing but *Rome* by the *Great City* here, though contrary to all Reason, he proceeds upon this Ground to give the various Acceptations of the Tenth Part of that City, p. 488. and after the mention of two or three, he at last fixes upon this as the most probable, *viz.* that it signifies the tenth Part of the City, not as it is *now*, but as it was *antiently*; the whole present City, as he observes, being no more than a tenth Part of the antient City. But however ingenious this Conceit may be, there lies this just Objection against it, *viz.* that St. *John*, in as plain Words as can be used, foretels the Destruction

tion of the tenth Part of the City that shall be standing *at the time of*, or just before its Destruction; and as the Words are *prophetical*, they cannot be understood in any other Sense: For to mention only a *tenth Part*, when the *Whole* was to be destroy'd, would have look'd too much like Fallacy, and using Words in an *equivocal* Sense, or as having at the same time two different Meanings, a *Whole* and a *Part*. And the very same Observation Mr. Mede makes himself in the following Page, 490, as to the understanding (as some did) *Constantinople* by *Babylon*.

P. 518. Mr. Mede in explaining *ch. xiv. 10.* has a remarkable Expression concerning the dreadful Punishment to be inflicted upon All that worship the Beast or his Image, or that receive his Mark, which he allows to be the greatest of any to be found in Scripture: *Pœna atrocis atrox descriptio, cui vix quicquam simile habet totius Canonis ambitus.* And since these were his Thoughts, he might from thence have been led to conclude, that there must be some kind of Blasphemy and Idolatry exceeding what is to be found in the Church of *Rome*, that calls for so terrible and extraordinary a Vengeance, and not only on some, but on *all* and *every one* that shall worship the Beast or his Image, or receive his Mark in his Forehead, or in his Hand: So that if we interpret this of *Mystical Babylon*, (which is mention'd just before by the *second* Angel,

Angel, and this denounced by a *third*, sufficient to point out the Distinction between them) we must affirm, that *no Papist can be saved*; the very *Uncharitableness* of which Interpretation is enough to deter any Protestant from closing with it.

P. 494. The Expression in the twelfth Chapter of the *Man-child's* being *caught up unto God, and to his Throne*, is explain'd by Mr. Mede of *Constantine's* Advancement to the Government of the *Roman Empire*; which is agreeable enough to the rest of his Exposition of that Chapter, but seems to contradict what he says in another Place (p. 905.) concerning *Christ's Throne*, and his *sitting down with his Father in his Throne*, ch. iii. 21. where he has this excellent Observation.—

“ Here are two Thrones mention'd. *My*
 “ *Throne*, says Christ; this is the Condition
 “ of glorified Saints, who sit with Christ in
 “ his Throne: But *my Father's* (i. e. God's)
 “ *Throne* is the Power of Divine Majesty;
 “ herein none may sit, but God and the God-
 “ *Man* Jesus Christ. To be installed in God's
 “ Throne, to sit at God's Right Hand, is to
 “ have a God-like Royalty, such as his Fa-
 “ ther hath, a Royalty altogether incom-
 “ municable, whereof no Creature is capa-
 “ ble.” Here he is plainly of Opinion that
 the *Throne of God* is incommunicable to any
 mere Creature; and I may add, that it is so
 even *mystically* applied. What God will ne-
 ver

ver part with, he will not *promise* so much as *in Figure*. This is Part of that Glory, which he will neither give nor promise to another. He vouchsafes to call Princes *Gods*, and to communicate to them a Part of his *Power*; but to take them up to, or to place them in, his *Throne*, would be to vest them with an higher Prerogative than they are capable of, and which is peculiar to himself alone, and to that God-Man who sits with him in the same *Throne*. Nor is there, I believe, any Instance or Intimation to be found in Scripture of such a Dignity or Privilege (though but *figuratively*) promised or bestow'd upon any Creature. The greatest Dignity of this kind that we read of there, is *Joseph's* Advancement by *Pharaoh* to the Government of *Egypt*; but even in this Case there was this necessary Exception expressly made by the King, *Only in the Throne will I be greater than thou*, Gen. xli. 40. The Expression therefore of being *caught up to the Throne of God*, can properly belong and be justly applied to none but *the Son of God*: And upon the whole I cannot but observe here once for all, that no Man writes better than *Mr. Mede* when he has no particular Hypothesis to serve; but when he has, we see the Difference but too plainly.

P. 496. *Mr. Mede* begins the Wilderness-State after the Reign of *Constantine*, as indeed he was obliged to do, when he had
made

made *Constantine* the Man-child, and the *Christian Church* the Mother. But here the Power of Truth forced him to own, that this State was *externally better* than the Servitude of that *Ethnick Tyranny*, which the *Christians* had been under before, but abounding with all manner of Apostasy, like that of the Golden Calf, *Baal-peor*, *Corah*, &c. And since he was come so near the Truth, and had his Eye as it were directly upon it, 'tis strange he should overlook it. But those ugly Enormities of the *Calf* and *Korah*, &c. might not suffer him to discern any fit Resemblance between the Primitive *Christians* and the *Israelites* in the Wilderness. But it should be consider'd, that the Analogy of *Scripture-Types* is only *partial*. 'Tis sufficient that there be a general Resemblance between the Signs and the Things signified, or an Agreement in some of the more remarkable Particulars. *Types* are to be interpreted like *Parables*, in which their Scope or Design is the thing to be regarded, and whatever is foreign to that, is not to be taken into the Comparison. Thus when our Lord commended the *unjust Steward* for acting *wisely*, he design'd thereby to teach *Christians* to be *wise*, but not to be *unjust*. And so when the Scripture compares the State of the Primitive *Christians* to the State of the *Israelites* sojourning in the Wilderness, it has no Design to take in *all* that was transacted there, but

but only their Sequestration from the World, and their daily miraculous Preservation, and the like.

P. 519. Mr. Mede refers that Text, *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth*, not to the foregoing Words, but to the following, for these three Reasons. 1. Because he does not remember any where in Scripture, that the Day of *Death* is call'd the Day of *Reward*: No more is it here, but a Day of *Rest* from their Labours. 2. Because the Voice from Heaven, with a Command to write, is never used but on *extraordinary* Occasions: Which is very true, and very applicable to the Antichristian State. 3. Because this seems to agree with the sounding of the seventh Trumpet, *ch. xi. 18*. But to my Apprehension it agrees much better with the Reign of Antichrist, when there will be such Trouble, Trial, and Danger, as represented just before, that *Death* will be the only Remedy the Righteous can then hope for; or if by *dying in the Lord* be meant the Case of Martyrdom, as is generally supposed, then this solemn Promise of Blessedness to all such, is highly proper and seasonable by way of Encouragement, as the foregoing Threatning was by way of Terror.

P. 527. The three first Vials Mr. Mede interprets in a *mystical* Sense, for this Reason, *viz.* because the *Orbis Bestianus*, or the Roman State, is said *ch. xi. 8.* to be *spiritually*

EGYPT; and consequently the Plague of the Boils of the first Vial, as he affirms, is to be interpreted *spiritually*, i. e. mystically and analogically, and so likewise the two following Vials, the Figures of the Plagues being taken from the same History, which, he says, ought carefully to be observ'd. But this Argument makes rather against him than for him: For that *Rome* or *Jerusalem* (or whatever Place is there meant) is *spiritually Egypt*, signifies no more than that 'tis not the *true* or the *very Egypt*, but only such as resembles it in *Condition* or *Character*. And because two Places cannot be one and the same, though called by the same Name, (but still with a Note of Distinction) is it therefore impossible, or at all improbable, that they should be visited with the same or a like Visitation? No; on the contrary, as they resemble one another in Wickedness, 'tis the more likely that they will resemble one another in Punishment: And therefore as the Plagues of *Egypt* are to be understood *literally* and *historically*, so the Plagues contain'd in the Vials, and which are to be inflicted on the Antichristian Beast, may and ought, I think, to be taken in the *literal* Sense: At least there is nothing in this Argument that should hinder us from understanding them in this manner. At the same time I cannot but own that he has said as much as can well be said for the *mystical* Sense; and particularly
as

as to his applying the sixth Vial to the Conversion of the *Jews*, there's a great deal of *Plausibility*, and would be likewise of *Probability* in what he says, if that great Event did not there come in a little *too late*. But that Conversion is what is much more plainly foretold at the End of the sixth Seal, a more likely Time for their Restoration, than that of the Destruction of Antichrist, which most probably is one Part of the Completion of the sixth Vial. Mr. *Mede* himself was aware of this; and therefore observes that if the *Jews* were not converted at this Time, they would be left to perish among the Enemies of the Church, p. 529. But God has provided for their Safety some time before this.

P. 533. Mr. *Mede* produces an illustrious Testimony of *Justin Martyr*, concerning the separate State of Souls and the *Millennium*; in which that antient Father says, that those who denied the Resurrection of the Dead, affirm'd that as soon as the Righteous die, their Souls are received up into Heaven; which he charges as an Error. So that this Notion or Opinion of the Soul's Admission into Heaven immediately after Death, seems to have sprung originally from a Disbelief of the Resurrection of the Body. And Mr. *Mede* upon this observes in a marginal Note, that many of the Fathers were of this Opinion, that the Souls of the Just do rest in some Paradise or

Place of Felicity and Refreshment, but receive not their Consummation in Heaven before the Resurrection. And yet notwithstanding this he seems to declare himself of another Mind: *Nobis tamen hic licebit aliter opinari*. From whence I cannot but observe, that there is a Currency of Opinions which the most learned and pious Men in all Ages have sometimes found very hard to withstand; and that every Age, more or less, has its peculiar Notions or Tenets, which 'tis not easy for a Man wholly to disengage himself from.

There are several other Passages I might except against, but I chuse rather to close these Observations with a few References to other Parts of Mr. Mede's Works, in which the Reader may find that learned *mystical* Expositor countenancing or concurring with the *literal* Interpreters of the *Apocalypse*.

1. He affirms *ch. xii.* to be the first Vision, and the Sum and Compendium of all that follows after, *p. 906.* and those Words, *Thou must prophesy again*, he says imply a new Beginning or Repetition *ab ovo*, *p. 478.*

2. He acknowledges that the same Phrases may be used to express like Matters of diverse and sundry Times, *p. 754.* And that the Fates and Sequels of Things foretold in the Prophets may be again and again repeated,

peated, and the Prophecies of them as it were often fulfilled; namely, by way of Analogy, but not of Propriety, p. 788.

3. He makes the Virgin-Company to be concurrent with the Times of Popery, and gives very good Reasons why they are so called, p. 510—513.

4. The seventh and last Vial he makes to be co-incident with the seventh Trumpet, p. 385. and supposes that some of the Vials are still to come, p. 923.

5. He thinks the Vintage to be the same with the Battle of *Armageddon*, p. 519.

6. He denies the sixth Seal to be the Time of *Christ's* second Advent, as some would have it, p. 551.

7. He supposes it possible that the Latitude of some Places may be a little chang'd since *Ptolemy's* Time, by some Motion of the Earth, whatsoever it be, p. 853. And if so, there may be another Change, in a more sensible and extraordinary manner, as I suppose under the sixth Seal.

8. He allows that the Elements, *i. e.* the Sun, Moon, and Stars, will not be subject to the Conflagration, p. 615.

9. He denies that Satan was ever yet bound or tied up, much less at the Time of *Constantine*, p. 880.

10. He allows of a *Mystical* and *Prophetical* Sense in *Christ's* Epistles to the seven Churches, and supposes they were intended for so many Patterns and Types of the several States or Ages of the Catholick Church *a principio ad finem*, succeeding in like Order the Churches there named, p. 305, 306, and 905.

11. He allows the measuring of the Temple in *Ezekiel* to have reference to the Time of the *New Jerusalem*. But how to expound it, he declares he knows not; and the Meaning he thinks not yet understood by any Man, p. 813, 816.

Lastly, his Doctrine concerning the Destruction of *Rome* and the Ruin of the *Ottoman* Empire, as foretold by *Daniel* and Saint *John*, of the Conversion of the *Jews*, and of the Call of the Gentiles, of the New Heavens and New Earth in the most literal Sense, of a First Resurrection, and of the *Millennial* State, seems, for the main, to be sound and good, and sufficiently proved and explained. Above all, as to the last, this learned and indefatigable Writer is in several Places very large and particular, and has vindicated and confirm'd that Doctrine by a great Variety of Arguments and Authorities; among which there is one very curious and remarkable *Justin Martyr* citing *Isa. lxx.*

22. according to the LXX, *As the days of the tree of life, are the days of my people*, in Proof or Confirmation of the Doctrine of the *Millennium*, affirms that those Days signify a thousand Years. Upon which Mr. *Mede* observes, that *Justin* seems to have thought *the Life of the Tree of Life*, or of Man in the State of Paradise, was to be a thousand Years; *i. e.* so long Man would have lived in this World if he had not sinned, and after that would have been translated into a happier Place and State. But now, because *Adam* had sinned in eating of the forbidden Fruit, neither he, nor any of his Posterity, who should be the longest Livers, would attain to that Number of Years, but die within that great Day, *p.* 534. But what was not attainable then, is to be the Privilege of the Saints in the last Days; as has since been further proved by a learned and ingenious Author, who has much improved upon Mr. *Mede* in this Point, and, in the second Part of his *Sacred Theory of the Earth*, has defended the Doctrine of the *Millennium* by many solid and unanswerable Reasonings, given a clear and lively Description of that blessed State, and abundantly refuted all the Exceptions and Objections that have been made against it. 'Tis true, this Author has been blamed for giving too free Scope to his *Philosophick Genius* in his Explanation of the Deluge, the Conflagration, and the Origin

(d 4) of

of Gog and Magog; and in his Application of some Passages from the *Apocalypse* he follows the general Hypothesis, understanding Antichrist and the two Witnesses in the *mystical* Sense, and *Babylon* to be the Seat of that Man of Sin. But these few things excepted, I can see nothing farther blameable or even defective in his Discourse on the *Millennium*, which appears, for the main, to be a compleat and finish'd Piece, set off with all the Beauty of Language and Force of Argument, and highly worthy the diligent Perusal of every serious Christian. This was the Opinion of a very competent Judge and eminent Author, the late Mr. Norris of Bemerton, who by reading this Part of Doctor Burnet's *Theory*, was so fully satisfied of the Truth of the *Millenary* Doctrine, that in a Postscript to his excellent Discourses on the *Beatitudes*, he makes this ingenuous Acknowledgment. "As to the present Discourses, I know of nothing I have to correct, only there is one Notion which I find occasion to enlarge, and carry on further than at first I was aware of. It is in the third *Beatitude*, concerning the *Meek's inheriting the Earth*: By which I am now fully convinced is principally meant, that they shall possess that *New Paradi- saical Earth* which is to succeed the Great Conflagration, and to be the Seat of the *Millennial* Reign of Christ. I do not un-
say

Mr. MEDE's Clavis Apocalyptica. 51

“ say any Part of my former Explication,
“ only I think it defective, and add this as
“ a further Supplement to it. For which
“ Notion I acknowledge myself indebted to
“ the Noble Author of the *Theory of the*
“ *Earth*; whom the Reader may consult
“ for further Satisfaction in this matter.”
Part II. Chap. v. pag. 162.



THE

Mr. Mear's Grace Apologies 51
 "For any Part of my former Exposition,
 "only I think it defective, and add this as
 "a further Supplement to it, for which
 "Notice I acknowledge myself indebted to
 "the Noble Author of the *Treatise* of the
 "Earth, whom the Reader may consult
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 Vol II Chap. 7. Page 152.



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T H E

THE
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OF
PROPHECIES
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VOL. I.

B

THE
Double Completion

BOOKS

CONSIDERED

IN CONNECTION WITH THE

Two-folded and of the

Vol. I. B

T H E
Double Completion
O F
P R O P H E C I E S
C O N S I D E R E D, &c.

THAT the same Prophecies may be fulfill'd at sundry Times and in different Manners, and that several of the Prophecies of the Old Testament were only partially and imperfectly fulfill'd at the first, and had their full Accomplishment in After-Times; and consequently that most of those Prophecies must have a *Primary* and *Ultimate*, a *Literal* and *Mystical* Sense in them, has been clearly and abundantly proved in a late Controversy concerning the due Application of ancient Prophecies to our Saviour *Christ*. But as his *First* or *Second* Coming is the great End to which all the Lines of Prophecy point and are directed; more or less, and in which they terminate; and since one is often mistaken for the other, some contending for that Sense only which limits and

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confines the Prophecies to *Christ's First* Coming, and others maintaining that they ought to be referr'd to his *Second*, (while at the same time both Sides may easily be reconciled) I shall here endeavour to shew, that neither of these two Senses is to be rejected or excluded, nor one to be set up in Opposition to the other; but that Both are either directly and expressly mention'd, or necessarily and evidently implied in the Prophecies themselves, or in the Context.

Let me only briefly observe in the first place, that the *Promises* of God or of *Christ* to his Church are to be consider'd in the Nature of Prophecy; so also are his Threatenings and Denunciations of Judgment: Both which however, though express'd in absolute Terms, do generally imply a Condition; which if complied with, the Performance of the one is certain and infallible, and the Execution of the other will be prevented or retarded. But there are some Promises and Threatenings that are peremptory and absolute, and which nothing can hinder the Accomplishment of. Such was our Lord's Denunciation against *Jerusalem*, and his Promise to be with his Church to the End of the World, both in his own Divine Nature, and by the Holy Ghost, according to those gracious Assurances he gave his Disciples just before his Departure from them—*Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* And, *I will give you another Comforter, that*
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he may abide with you for ever. From which Words we may observe, that there are some Promises or Predictions, that have not only a *gradual*, but a *constant* and *continued* Completion; that are fulfill'd not only at *different* Times, but at *all* Times. For we may be sure, according to the Tenor of this most gracious Promise, that ever since *Christ* has had a Church upon Earth, he has never *once* left her wholly destitute of his own special Divine Presence, or of the Aids and Influences of the Divine Comforter. If some Prophecies then were to have a *gradual* and *daily* Completion, without Interruption, and to the World's End, we need not wonder to find others that cannot be fully answer'd without a *double* or *threefold* Completion. This being premised, I proceed to examine some Passages that have a plain Reference to both Advents of *Christ*, *i. e.* to some remarkable Circumstances and Events attending his *first* and *second* Coming. I begin with the noted one concerning *Elijah*, who is describ'd as the Harbinger and Forerunner of the *Messiah* in the last Days.

MAL. IV. 5, 6.

Behold, I will send you *Elijah* the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Had Christians been left to understand this Passage according to the plain Sense and Force of the Words, and the Scope of the Context, without any Application or Interpretation of it by our Blessed Saviour, there is no doubt to be made, but All would readily have understood it of *Elias the Tishbite*. For what else can the *coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord*, and *smiting the earth with a curse* mean, but the Day of Judgment; which, as it will be usher'd in by the Burning of the World, so is plainly pointed at, and briefly describ'd in the first Verse of this short Chapter. *For behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, and it shall leave them neither root nor branch.* Now our Saviour's Interpretation of this Prophecy may serve as a *Key* to us for interpreting most other Prophecies relating to himself. He does not deny, or endeavour to set aside the plain *literal* Sense of the Words, but shews and discovers a farther Design, a *mystical* and *spiritual* Meaning couch'd under them. He readily allows, yea, asserts and maintains the Truth of this Prophecy in its *primary* and *literal* Sense. For when his Disciples ask'd him, *Why say the Scribes that Elias must first come?* He answer'd and said unto them, *Elias TRULY shall first come, and SHALL restore all things.* Now when our
Lord

Lord spake these Words, *John Baptist's* Ministry was past, and he here speaks of what was to come. And the *Restoration of all things*, can, in no Sense, be ascrib'd to the Baptist. He was only the Preparer of the Way of the Lord, a Preacher of Repentance, a Baptizer with Water, and as our Saviour himself testifies, *He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.* But then as there was to be a Forerunner to his *first* Coming as well as to his *second*, as Both were alike to suffer Death, as Both were to bear Testimony to *Christ*, and to oppose the Apostacy of the Times; boldly to rebuke Vice, and patiently to suffer for the Truth's sake: I say, from this Similitude of outward Circumstances, and also from a Similitude of Temper between these two great Forerunners, our Saviour calls the Baptist by the Name of *Elias*, and affirms that the Prophecy relating to the One, was likewise a Mark or Indication of the Other. *But I say unto you, that Elias is come already (i. e. he who was to come in the Spirit and Power of Elias) and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed.* Here 'tis observable, that our Lord, in speaking of *John Baptist*, the Figurative *Elias*, speaks of what was *past*; but in speaking of *Elias* properly so call'd, he speaks in the *future* Tense. A sufficient Intimation, that the Prophecy of *Malachi* respects a double Period, which can be no other than the *first* and *second* Advent of

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the *Messiah*. If therefore we would submit to our Lord's Authority, and conform to his Interpretation, we must take the Words in both the Senses which he has given us of them. To apply the *Whole* to *John Baptist* and to *Christ's first Coming*, is to do the same thing by the *Prophecies*, in effect, as has lately been done by the *Miracles* of our Saviour, to take away the plain *literal* Sense, and to turn All into *Figure* and *Allegory*. On the other hand, to deny the more hidden and mystical Meaning of that Prophecy (which, without our Lord's Interpretation, might not have been known or understood) is to make ourselves wiser than He. As therefore Both Senses appear to have been *originally* design'd, as Both are very consistent, as Both rest upon the same Divine Authority, they are Both equally to be maintain'd, not One in Exclusion or Prejudice to, but in Conjunction with, and Support of, the Other. And as we have our Saviour's own Authority for the Application of this Prophecy to his *first* and *second* Advent, so have we the Authority of *St. John* for applying the following Passage the same way.

Z E C H. XII. 10.

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplication, and they shall look on ME whom they have PIERCED; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for

for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one is in bitterness for his first-born.

That this Prophecy relates to the last Days, and to the general Conversion of the *Jews*, is plain from the whole Scope of the Text and Context. And were there Room for any Doubt in this Case, 'tis wholly taken away by St. *John's* Allusion to the same Prophecy, and Application of it to the same Period, in these Words—*Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him. And all kindreds (or Tribes) of the earth shall wail because of him: Even so, Amen.* Every Expression in this Passage points at *Christ's* second Coming; and those Expressions in particular—and *they also that pierced him*, are a plain Citation from, and Confirmation of *Zechary's* Prophecy, as applied to that Period. And yet this same Apostle afterwards applies those very Expressions to the Time of our Saviour's Crucifixion. For after he had observ'd that they brake not his legs, but pierced his side with a spear, he presently adds, *For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled; A bone of him shall not be broken. And again, another Scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they have pierced.* Which is spoken of the *Jews* then present: For 'tis plain, that the Evangelist does not apply the Words of the Prophecy merely to that Act of Cruelty, but to the Persons likewise looking on, meaning the

the then present Spectators. So that here is another clear Evidence of two different and distant Completions of one and the same Prophecy, the one at the *first*, and the other at the *second* Coming of *Christ*.

JOEL II. 28—32.

And it shall come to pass afterwards, that I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also upon the servants, and upon the handmaids, in those days will I pour out of my Spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.

What the Prophet expresses by *it shall come to pass* AFTERWARDS, St. Peter expresses, *it shall come to pass* IN THE LAST DAYS: which *last Days* are of a comprehensive Signification, denoting the Times of the Gospel in general, and including both the *first* and *second* Advent of *Christ*. And that this great Promise of the Extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit were originally design'd to be fulfill'd at two distinct and remarkable Periods, the one a little after our Lord's Ascension into Heaven, and the other some short time before his coming to Judgment, can be

no Matter of reasonable Doubt to any that considers on the one hand St. Peter's Application of the Words to the *first* Period, and the plain Scope and Force of the Words themselves, in relation to the *second*, as they contain a brief Account of the Day of Judgment, and of the Signs and Prognosticks of that awful Day: And farther compares this Promise with the other Promise of God made to the *Jews*, in the forecited Passage, of pouring upon them *the Spirit of Grace and Supplication* at their general Conversion. And 'tis also observable, that though St. Peter applies the Words of *Joel* to the present Occasion, and shews them to be fulfill'd at that Time, yet he assures us likewise that they had a farther View, and were to have a fuller Completion. *For the promise*, says he, *is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even unto as many as the Lord our God shall call.* Now the Promise he speaks of, and which he cites from *Joel*, relates not to the ordinary, but to the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit; and this was made to *all that were afar off*, and has, I don't doubt, all along, in some measure (tho' in a more silent and less sensible way) been made good to the Church of *Christ*, and will, in an higher Degree and a more conspicuous Manner, in the last Days.

ISAIAH XI. 1—5:

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his
his

his roots. *And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth. And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.*

This is one of those mix'd or compound Prophecies that relate to *Christ* in his two-fold Appearance. The whole Chapter indeed is no other than a Description of the *Messiah* at his first and second Coming. The former Part of this Passage sets forth his humble Birth and royal Pedigree, his spiritual Improvement, or the constant Residence of the Spirit with him. And the *fourth* Verse represents him in the Quality of a righteous Judge, vindicating the Meek and Patient, and punishing the Mighty and the Wicked *with the Rod of his Mouth, and with the Breath of his Lips*; Expressions parallel to those used by *St. Paul* and *St. John*, when they describe him as coming to oppose and to take vengeance on Antichrist; the former in these Words — *Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit* (or

(or Breath) of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming; the latter, as follows—*And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron.* Both which Passages, as I observ'd, relate to the same Time and to the same Event, viz. the total Overthrow, and final Destruction of Antichrist and his Adherents at the second glorious Appearing of our Lord. And that the Words of the Prophet refer to the same, appears highly probable, not only from the Use of the like Expressions, but from what immediately follows—*The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.* Which Time of universal Peace, whether taken literally or metaphorically, or in both Senses together, can be understood of no Period or Season so reasonably or properly, as That which will follow the Destruction of Antichrist. And if this be allow'd, we have then another plain Instance of a *twofold* Completion of the same Prophecy, as respecting both the *first* and *second* Coming of the *Messiah*.

Z E C H. IX. 9, 10.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt

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colt the sole of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle-bow shall be cut off; and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: And his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even unto the ends of the earth.

The former Part of this Prophecy was punctually and signally fulfill'd at our Lord's publick Entrance into *Jerusalem*, and another Prophecy mention'd by *David* in the *Eighth* Psalm remarkably answer'd at the same time, when the Children sang *Hosannas* to this son of *David*; and if these had held their peace, as our Saviour observ'd on that Occasion, the very Stones would immediately have cried out. So impossible is it to hinder the *Accomplishment* of Prophecies, or any *Circumstance* of them *when* they are accomplish'd. But the latter Part of the Words, all on a sudden, as is usual with the Prophets, snatches us away from this lowly and lovely Scene of a meek and merciful Saviour, riding in humble Triumph upon an Ass, and on a Colt the Fole of an Ass; and carries us to far distant Regions, and to future Ages, even to the last Days and to the Ends of the Earth, to view the Extent of the *Messiah's* Dominion, and the Peace and Prosperity of his Reign, and the coming in of the Fulness of the Gentiles into the Church. Now one plain End and Design of such sudden Changes in the Scenes of Action, or in the Characters repre-

represented, as we often meet with in the Prophetick Writings, is to preserve or renew in the Minds both of *Jewish* and *Christian* Readers a lively Image of the Dignity and Divinity of that wonderful Person, who submitted to so many Acts of Debasement and Condescension for their sakes. Accordingly when the Prophets or Evangelists represent the *Messiah* in a State of Suffering or Humiliation, they generally cast some Gleams of Light into such shady Descriptions; and in order to prevent any Prejudice or ill Conception fastening upon us by viewing too closely or dwelling too long on the dark Side or low State of the *Messiah*, they take care to remind us of the other Part of his Character, or of some Branches of his Regal Office: Which is one Cause of our Lord's *first* and *second* Advent being so often placed together, or very near one another. Nor is there perhaps any other, or at least not any more likely Reason to be assign'd, than this, for that serious and pompous Introduction of the Account which St. *John* gives us of our Blessed Saviour's surprizing Condescension in washing his Disciples Feet, which is usher'd in after this solemn manner—*Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the End. And supper being ended (the devil having now put into the heart of Judas*
Isca-

Isca-riot, Simon's son, to betray him) *Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God and went to God, he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel, and girded himself.* Now what could be the Design of all this grand *Apparatus* to a short and plain Narrative, but to prevent any mean or unbecoming Opinion of our Blessed Saviour, which so servile and debasing an Act might be apt to create, and to imprint deeply on our Minds and Memories the Greatness and Dignity of the Person so condescending? And this is what our Lord himself thought fit to remind his Disciples of *just after*, the more to provoke and engage their Imitation of him, and to keep them still in the same right Judgment concerning him—*Ye call me Master and Lord; and ye say well, for so I am.* And for the same Reason, when the Disciples of *John Baptist* came to him, to enquire and be satisfied *who he was*, and who then looked upon him as *Inferior* to their Master, he first perform'd some miraculous Cures before them, and then concluded his Answer to *John's* Message with these memorable Words—*And blessed is he, who-soever shall not be offended in me.* To prevent any such Offence in ourselves, or any Abuse of such condescending Goodness, we shall do well, upon reading the Gospel or the Prophets, to bear in our Minds the foregoing Observation, that so whenever we behold our
Saviour

Saviour humbling and debasing himself, or making familiar Approaches towards us, we may not be tempted thereby to forget our Distance, or to entertain unworthy Apprehensions of him. And there is more Reason for this Caution, than some may be aware of; but this is no Place for enlarging, especially on what may appear itself to be a Digression: But if it be thought so, 'tis not, I hope, without its Use. I have now produced five Passages out of the Prophets, in proof of the Point I proposed to examine, and shall conclude this short Essay with the following one.

DAN. VII. 13, 14.

I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Antient of days, and they brought him near before him: And there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

That this Passage has some relation to our Lord's *second Coming*, is generally allow'd; and this Opinion is founded upon those Expressions of the *Son of Man's coming with the clouds of heaven*, and upon our Saviour's saying before Caiaphas, in reference to this Prophecy (in which only the *Messiah* is spoken

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of under the Title of the *Son of Man*) — *Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven.* So far indeed these Words belong or point to *Christ's second Advent*, that he will come in like manner as he has been seen to go into Heaven, *i. e.* he will come with the Clouds of Heaven and with his holy Angels. And therefore upon our Saviour's alluding to them, and upon the Concession of others, I produce this Passage as another Instance of the same Prophecy's having a farther View than the primary Sense imports, and serving more Ends than one. But that this Prophecy was originally intended to foreshew and represent one material Circumstance or Consequence of our Lord's *first Advent*, is plain from those Expressions which represent him as coming with the Clouds, not *from*, but *into* Heaven, and as *brought near* or presented *before the Antient of Days* by the holy Angels, his Attendants; which can signify nothing so properly, as *Christ's first Entrance*, as *Son of Man*, into the Court of Heaven, and his *first Approach* to the Throne of God; when he was solemnly inaugurated into his Regal Office, receiv'd the Investiture of his Kingdom as *God-Man*, and began the Exercise of an universal Dominion.

S. D. G.

A VIEW

A
V I E W
OF THE
Seven Churches in *Asia*,

As representing in a regular successive Order

Seven different States of *Christianity*.

BEING AN
EXPOSITION

On the Second and Third Chapters of the
REVELATION of St. *JOHN*.



T H E
P R E F A C E.

THE *Agents and Emissaries of the Powers of Darkness* were never so bold and busy as they are at this time, to decry all Revelation in general, and the Book of Revelation in particular; which they have lately attack'd with uncommon Spite and Virulence. But there is something at the Bottom of this, which they themselves are not aware of. He that set them to work has an End to serve by it, out of the Reach of their CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS. He knows full well that the Prophecies contain'd in this Book are just ripe for Accomplishment, yea, that some of them are now actually fulfilling. He knows that his Day is coming, that his short, but most triumphant Reign upon Earth is hastening on apace; that ANTICHRIST properly and emphatically so

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called,

called, who is so particularly describ'd and against whom such particular Caution is given in the Revelation, will soon make his Appearance upon the Stage of the World. No wonder then, that he employs his learned Tools, and uses his utmost Efforts at this Juncture to cry down the Revelation, to lessen its Esteem among Christians, to invalidate its divine Authority, and expose it to Scorn and Contempt; and thereby, if possible, to prevent Men from looking into a Book, which of All Books in the World they are now most concern'd to know and consider. But what particular Advantage the Patrons and Promoters of Infidelity can promise to themselves and their Cause by proving the Revelation to be Doubtful or Uncanonical, is not so easy to discern: It consists of Mysteries which they profess not to understand, of Obscurities which they explode, of Predictions which they would seem to despise, of Doctrines which they pretend to disregard. And will Men of Parts and Learning, of their own free Motion, exercise their Wit, waste their Time, and employ their whole Strength, to confute a Writing, that is, by their own Confession, so far beneath their Notice and Regard? No; 'Tis the Spirit that worketh in the Children of Unbelief and Dis-

Disobedience that has prompted these Men to examine with critical Spite and Torture the Authority of this Book in particular, and to treat it with solemn Banter and profane Sneer. But let them sneer on: The Event will soon prove its Authority; the Accomplishment will proclaim its Divinity.

No Book in the Jewish Canon was of less Esteem than the Prophecy of Daniel; and yet no Prophecy was ever more exactly and punctually fulfill'd; and accordingly has been held in high Veneration ever since. 'Tis the same with the Revelation of St. John: It has been slighted by the Generality, because not understood; and nothing has contributed more to its Disesteem, than the many various, inconsistent, and contradictory Interpretations that have been given of it by Expositors, according to their different Schemes and Attachments in Religion or Policy. For whatever of this Kind has yet been offer'd to the World, seems either too much labour'd in the Exposition, or too much strain'd and limited in the Application, or calculated only to serve an Hypothesis or a Party.

Wherefore avoiding those Rocks which so many Others have split upon, and following the only

sure Guide which they have All left behind them, I mean, Christ's Epistles to the Seven Churches, I shall endeavour, by the divine Assistance, to open the way to a clearer Knowledge and fuller Discovery of the many wonderful Things contain'd in this Book of Revelation, by proving both from external and internal Evidence, that these Epistles of Christ are in reality strictly Prophetical, and that the Prophecies implied therein reach to the present Age, and must have their full Accomplishment before the following Parts of the Revelation come to be fulfill'd,

T H E INTRODUCTION.

THERE are three Things, as I conceive, previously necessary to be observ'd, in relation to Prophecy in General, and to this most eminent Prophecy in Particular. 1. I observe, That Prophecies are not to be treated or expounded as *Ænigma's* or *Parables*, wherein, if the main Drift and Design of the Proposer be answer'd, it is sufficient: But in *Prophecy* every Circumstance and Expression must particularly accord with the Thing prophesied of; since in this there is nothing superfluous or redundant, nothing added in the way of Ornament or Embellishment, not a Name but has a peculiar Import and Significancy, not a Word but carries in it some Note or Characteristick, whereby to distinguish the Event or Events pointed at from all other Events whatsoever. 2. It is observable, That as *Daniel's* Prophecy relates chiefly to *Christ's First Coming*, so *St. John's* relates principally to his *Second*; that as the Former has an Eye all along to the State of
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the *Jews*, so the Latter considers mostly the Condition of the *Gentiles*; that both however meet and terminate in the last great Period and Consummation of all things, and serve to confirm and illustrate each other. 3. It is to be noted, that as several of the Prophecies in the Old Testament, which were to have their full and ultimate Completion *only in Christ*, do yet bear a primary and partial Respect to Things and Persons, not far distant from the Times of those Prophecies; so the Prophecies contain'd in the *Revelation*, which look directly forward to the last State and Scene of Things in this World, have been thought by most Men to have had a nearer View, and to include and import a great Number of *intermediate Events*, which, 'tis readily confess'd, do bear some faint, low, and imperfect Shadow or Resemblance of the *Truth* and *Substance*; but the grand Completion is *yet to come*.

A VIEW

A
V I E W
O F T H E
Seven Churches, &c.

C H A P. I.

Arguments to prove that Christ's Epistles to the Seven Churches are to be understood, not in an Historical, but altogether Prophetical Sense.

I Begin with those Proofs or Arguments, which, for Distinction sake, I call *Negative* and *External*.

First, I observe in General, that 'tis no just Objection to the Point I am maintaining, that these Epistles are penn'd in an *historical* way; since this is common to many other Prophecies in the Old Testament: Yea, the brightest and most express and most particular Account we meet with in the Prophets, of the Person and Sufferings of the *Messiah*, is an *Historical Narration*, Isa. liii. 2. I observe,

serve, that the *whole* Book of *Revelation* is denoted by the *Words* of this *Prophecy*, ch. i. ver. 3. as if design'd on purpose to intimate that *these Epistles*, as well as any other Part, were *Prophetical*; and therefore in the very Beginning it is called the *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, which God gave unto him to shew unto his *Servants Things which must shortly come to pass*: which last Words have by modern Expositors been wholly applied to those Prophecies which follow these Epistles, the Epistles themselves having been pass'd over, as Matter of *mere History*; when as, in truth, they are applicable to these in the first and strictest Sense of the Words, and to the Other only in a remote and secondary Sense. By the *Things which must shortly come to pass*, is not to be understood a present or *immediate* Accomplishment of all the Things spoken or prophesied of, but their *successive* Accomplishment in their proper Times or Seasons; some of which would soon commence, or *shortly come to pass*, and all the rest follow in a regular Course, every one in its own Order, without any intervening Delay, or Alteration of the Divine Purpose. Now, according to this Observation, the things contain'd in *these Epistles* (which must in Reason be allow'd to be *Part* of the Prophecy of this Book, when the *Whole* is a Prophecy) though they were the First Things that were to come to pass, yet were they not to happen all at once, but to succeed one another in

in an orderly Course of Time. 3. 'Tis farther observable, from the Account of the Churches these Epistles are directed to, that they are not to be taken *literally* and *historically*, but *mystically* and *prophetically*. For St. *John* is ordered to write, not to *Seven Churches*, but to *THE Seven Churches* (which seems to imply and include the States and Characters of *all* the several Christian Churches that should be in the World.) Accordingly it is said, *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches*; not unto *this*, or *that*, or *these*, but to *THE Churches* in general. Again, ch. xxii. ver. 16. *I Jesus have sent mine Angel to testify unto you these things in THE Churches: These Things*, i. e. All the Things that had been mention'd before in this Book of *Revelation*; many of which, 'tis plain, are not to be accomplish'd till near the End of the World: so that here *the Churches* evidently denote *All* the Churches successively from the Beginning of Christianity to the End of the World. And this is the more remarkable, because the Angel does not mention *All* the Churches then in Being, no nor the *most famous* Churches then in the World, as *ROME*, *ANTIOCH*, *ALEXANDRIA*, and others, and such no doubt as had been Patterns of Instruction and Admonition, as well as those here named. And it is farther to be noted, that as the Church of *Ephesus* continued to After-Ages, notwithstanding the Threatening to remove her Candlestick; so
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in St. *John's* Time there was no Christian Church at *Thyatira*; and therefore the Apostle must speak of it not as one really existing, but by a prophetic Spirit and in a mystical Sense. To this I may add, that *Christ* represents himself to the Church in *Ephesus*, as *walking in the midst of the seven golden Candlesticks*, that is, of the Seven Churches; which may be best interpreted by that other Promise of his to the Apostles; *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.* For it would be too partial and restrain'd a Sense put upon this Passage, to suppose that our Saviour's Presence was to be confin'd to *seven particular Churches in Asia*, and not to be extended to *all* the Churches that should be in the World. And therefore from this mention of his *walking in the midst of the seven golden Candlesticks*, we can reasonably infer no less than that he plainly intended we should understand him as speaking not of those *particular* Churches only, but of *all* the Churches in general. 4. I cannot but observe, that if these Epistles were *purely historical*, and order'd to be sent or deliver'd to the several Churches mention'd, we might hope to meet with some Records or Notices, that they were so deliver'd or sent by St. *John* to the respective Churches; but so far from this, that at the First Council held at *Laodicea*, no Traces or Footsteps could be found of any such Epistle deliver'd to that Church: And therefore this *First Laodicean Council*

Council rejected the *Revelation*, as Uncanonical. But, 5. That which may be thought sufficient of itself to put this Matter beyond all reasonable Doubt, is, that the Characters here given of Two of the Churches, *viz.* SARDIS and LAODICEA, are so very bad, as not to be any way applicable to the *Apostolick Age*; since the former is represented as almost universally corrupted, and to have only just Faith enough to keep her alive; and the other to be without Faith and Works too, and at the same time to be so strangely ignorant of her own wretched Condition, as to fancy herself abounding in all spiritual Riches, when she was nothing but Poverty and Nakedness. Now these are Characters that no way suit with those *Primitive Times*, when there were so many burning and shining Lights in the Church, when the Love of Christians towards *Christ* and one another, was lively, warm, and vigorous; when their Faith was able to remove Mountains, and, which is greater still, to overcome the World, and made them more than Conquerors; when they were zealous of good Works, and thirsted after Martyrdom, being ready not only to suffer Shame for the Name of *Christ*, but to lay down their Lives for his sake, as Multitudes of them did in those Days. 'Tis plain then to me, that though the Churches here named, as *Ephesus*, *Smyrna*, *Pergamus*, and the rest, might, all or most of them, be really existing in the Apostles Time, yet that
both

both their *Names* and *Charters* are wholly *typical* and *prophetical*, as being designed by the Holy Ghost, in this *Book of Prophecy*, (which should therefore direct and ascertain their prophetical Meaning) to signify and represent the *Seven-fold State of Christ's Church militant here on Earth*. But this will be best learnt from a particular and distinct View of the Contents of the several Epistles; in which there are some things common to All, and others peculiar to Each, and which contain the *positive Proofs* I come now to examine. Which are,

Secondly, The *internal* Marks and Characters, and their exact Correspondency or Agreement with the *outward* Events, or the several States of the Christian Church as describ'd in History: And these consist of the following Particulars. 1. The mystical or prophetical Name of each Church; 2. The Introductory Part, or the several Titles of *Christ*; 3. The Commendation and Reproof, together or apart; 4. The Exhortation or Threatning; 5. The Promise of a peculiar and distinguishing Reward, suited to the State and Probation of each Church, as a Motive or Encouragement to Perseverance or Repentance; 6. The Monitory Conclusion: All and Every of which Particulars do marvelously tend, both jointly and severally, to point out the Meaning and illustrate the Design of the *Prophetick Spirit* in each Epistle, and to confirm the *Hypothesis* I am defending.

To

To prevent Digression and Repetition, as much as possible, I shall here throw together a few short preliminary Remarks or *Postulata*, which it may be proper for the Reader to be appriz'd of beforehand, and to bear in his Mind as he goes along. 1. That the *State of Christianity* in every Church is here denominated from the State that is then *most predominant* or prevailing, but not wholly exclusive of other States, but these overlook'd and not mention'd by Christ. 2. That this State, Condition, or Temper of the Church is sometimes more visible and conspicuous in *one* Place or Country than *another*, and consequently *there* we are to look for the whole Description. 3. That the Period or Duration of each State is very different, some being very long, and some short, and the rest between both. 4. That one State does not always end, when another begins; for though the Beginning of each be distinct and successive, in Order of Time, yet their End is not, but continues afterwards in the Effects, notwithstanding the Beginning of the rest: So that 'tis somewhat difficult to settle and adjust the exact Periods and Commencements of every distinct Church, or State of Christianity; especially since some of the Middle States, as to their *predominant* Characters, are still very prevailing in the World. The following Calculations however will, I trust, be found pretty exact and well supported. 5. That these Epistles, though written only

to particular Persons, to the *Angels* or Bishops of the Churches, must yet be supposed, by reasonable Construction, to be directed likewise to, or at least to concern all the Members of the several Churches over which they presided, but still with an Eye more particularly to the Governing Part.

These things premised, we come now to consider the literal Contents and prophetic Import of each Epistle. *What thou seest, write it in a Book, and send it unto the seven Churches which are in Asia; unto EPHESUS, and unto SMYRNA, and unto PERGAMUS, and unto THYATIRA, and unto SARDIS, and unto PHILADELPHIA, and unto LAODICEA.* The mention of the Churches which are in *Asia*, may be thought by some sufficient to overthrow what I have advanced against understanding these Epistles in an *Historical* Sense. But to this I answer, That as the *Name* of every Church seems design'd by our Saviour to be peculiarly and emphatically expressive of its own proper and distinguishing State or Character (as shall be shewn under each) so That of *Asia* seems in this Place to have a *mystical* Meaning, and to denote something more than one *Third*, or Lesser Part of the then known World, even the *whole* World in general; which, as the same St. *John* has observ'd elsewhere, *lies in Wickedness*, or in the Wicked One, ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ: and therefore is well denoted or represented to us by the Word *ἀσία* or *ἀσίνη*, which signifies muddy or miry,

miry, corrupt, filthy, and polluted, as the World always is, being a Sink of Vice and Corruption, and over-spread with *Filthiness* and a *Superfluity of Naughtiness*, and as being likewise under the baneful Influence and Dominion of the Prince of Darkness, emphatically stiled in Scripture *the God of this World*, who, with his Legions of impure Spirits, is continually walking up and down in it, seeking whom he may defile and devour. The Church of *Christ* therefore, or the Seven Churches are very properly said to be (not of, but) *in Asia*, that is, to have their Residence or Pilgrimage *in*, though they are forbid having any familiar Commerce or being much conversant *with*, this nasty evil World.

CH A P. II. Ep. I.

*An Exposition of Christ's Epistle to the Church
in EPHESUS.*

*The First
Church, or the
Ephesine State
of Christianity.*

REvel. ii. ver. 1. *Unto the Angel of the Church in EPHESUS, write.*—By the *Angels* of the several Churches, we are to understand the Bishops and Pastors; who are here called *Angels*, in Allusion, I conceive, to what we read in Scripture, particularly in the Prophet *Daniel*, of their be-
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ing the more immediate Ministers of God's Providence, of their presiding over Human Affairs, and having peculiar Kingdoms allotted to them for their respective Provinces; for the Welfare and Prosperity of which, they are represented as having a very solicitous Concern. And by the *Church in EPHEsus*, we have, I think, abundantly sufficient Grounds to understand the *pure Primitive Church*, plainly signified and set forth by its *Name and Character*. For *E-*

EPHESUS,
what it signifies
in this Place.

phesus properly denotes *Love or Desire*, or an ardent and affectionate Desire, which is a just and true Character, in short, of the *First Christians*, who were so eminently distinguish'd by their fervent Love to *Christ* and one another, that they drew the Observation of the Heathens upon them, who were wont to cry out with Admiration, *See, how these Christians love one another!* The Blood of *Christ* was yet warm in their Breasts, and the Spirit of Religion brisk and vigorous.

The Commente-
ment and Dura-
tion of the E-
phesine State.

Now this *Ephesine* State of Christianity I suppose to have commenced at the Conclusion of the *Apostolick Age*, or immediately after the Death of the last and longest Liver of the Apostles, *St. John*; and to end a little before the *Dio- clesian Persecution*, or the tenth and last general Persecution, commonly called the *Æra of the Martyrs*, and which begins the *Smyr-
nean*

near State: So that the *Primitive State of Christianity*, denoted by *Ephesus*, lasted just about two hundred Years, that is, from the End of the First to the Beginning of the Fourth Century; towards the latter Part of which State the Christian Zeal and Love began to abate, as we shall see hereafter.

Christ's Title. Ibid. *These things saith He*

that holdeth the Seven Stars in his Right Hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden Candlesticks.—By the *Stars* I understand the Pastors of the Church, according to that of the Prophet *Daniel*.—*They that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the Stars for ever and ever.* Where, by the *Wise*, we are, doubtless, to understand the *People of God*, in Contradistinction to the *Pastors of the Church*, whose peculiar Province it is to labour in the great Work of *turning many to Righteousness*. The former are wise unto Salvation, but wise only or chiefly for themselves; the latter are not only to take care of their own, but to set forward the Salvation of All. And the different Resemblance here made in the Comparison, seems to justify this Distinction. For whereas the *Firmament*, to which the *Wise* are liken'd, is one vast *Expansum* of Matter inclusive of, but really distinct from, those glittering Luminaries the *Stars*, which are placed at convenient Distances from each other, to dissipate the Darkness of their re-

spective Orbs, and by their united Refulgency to illuminate the whole celestial Frame: So in the *Church Catholick* there is a peculiar and distinct Order of Men appointed for *Burning and Shining Lights*, which according to their several Capacities and the Extent of their different Spheres of Acting, are to enlighten those that sit in Darkness, and, by their joint Endeavours, to communicate the Light of the glorious Gospel to the whole Body of Christian People, wheresoever dispers'd throughout the Face of the Earth. And as in the *Natural World* the *Firmament* would be involv'd in one perpetual and universal Darkness without the greater and lesser Lights of Heaven; so in the *Moral World* Mankind would labour under a total Eclipse of spiritual Darkness, if those Burning and Shining Lights of the Church were once extinct. And since there is so great an Analogy between the *Pastors* of the Church and the *Stars* of Heaven, under the *present* State of Things, the Resemblance will not be lessen'd, but rather enlarg'd, in a *future* State of Recompence: And therefore most fitly are Bishops and Pastors here denoted by *Stars*, both in regard of the Resplendency of their Doctrine and Example, and with respect likewise to the Preheminency of their Reward.

By *Candlesticks*, our Saviour himself acquaints us, we are to understand *Churches*. In the *Jewish Church* there was but One
Candle-

Candlestick with Seven Lamps, to denote that the true Religion was then confined to One Nation; but in the *Christian Church* there are *Seven*, which is a Number of Universality and Perfection, to signify the diffusing the Light of the Gospel throughout all Nations. For a *Candlestick* is design'd both to receive and emit the Light; and as in the Symbol it thus fitly denotes the Church in general, so wherever it is fix'd, it shews the Dignity and Preheminency of that Church above any other, by the more than ordinary Illumination of the Holy Ghost. And these *Candlesticks* are said to be of *Gold*, to shew both their intrinsick Worth, and their Stability or Durableness against all Oppression and Opposition.

The Title then that *Christ* here gives himself is peculiarly adapted to the State and Condition of the *Primitive Church*. 'To be held in the Right Hand' is a Mark of Honour and Safety. To walk in the midst of any thing betokens Superiority, Inspection, and Visitation. Our Saviour therefore designs to assure the Angel of the Church in *Ephesus*, by this Title, that he is the glorious Protector and the great Bishop of all the Churches; that the Pastors, who are the *Stars in his Right Hand*, are more immediately under his Care and Inspection: At the same time intimating to those Primitive Clergy and Laity, that they were not to lay claim to, or think to engross this whole Privilege, or

imagine themselves the *only* Objects of their Saviour's special Regard and Protection; since there were *Six* other Churches or States of Christianity that were alike entitled to this Favour, and Subject to the like Visitation: That, however, since most of the others would degenerate, and not live up to this original Standard of Purity and Perfection, and yet be equally under his Rule and Governance; they had Reason to argue *à fortiori*, that they themselves, who were the First Fruits of the Spirit, the most Veteran Soldiers of *Christ*, and to be Patterns to After-Ages, should not be destitute of his gracious Favour and Almighty Protection.

One thing farther may be learnt from this Title, *viz.* that *Christ*, as the Searcher of Hearts and Visitor of the Churches, had already, in his Divine Foreknowledge, inspected and examin'd the State and Case of every Church; and so gives Directions and Instructions accordingly.

The Commendation.

Ver. 2. *I know thy Works, and thy Labour, and thy Patience.* Which is thus varied and repeated ver. 3. *And hast born, and hast patience, and for my Name sake hast labour'd, and hast not fainted.* Which Repetition shews *Christ's* Delight to recount the Virtues of his Saints, and points out some more than ordinary Service and remarkable Perseverance. And this indeed those Primitive Saints abundantly display'd both in their Active and Passive

Passive Obedience: For they not only outwardly profess'd the greatest Love to their Blessed Master, but gave the best Testimony of that Love by their constant Readiness to lay down their Lives for his sake. And 'tis wonderful to observe, what a great *Fight of Afflictions* these First Renown'd Heroes of Christianity sustain'd, having pass'd through no less than *seven* General Persecutions, besides several Topical or Lesser ones; as if these *Golden* and acceptable Men thus tried in the Fire and in the Furnace of Adversity, were design'd by Providence to bear in their own Bodies the Marks or *Stigmata* of the whole Body of the Faithful in all the several States and Periods of Christianity. Their Character in general and in short, and which is sufficient for my present Purpose, and exactly agreeable to our Saviour's Commendation, is thus summ'd up by the *Noted Author of Primitive Christianity*—" Here we
 " find a *Piety* active and zealous, shining
 " through the blackest Clouds of Malice and
 " Cruelty; afflicted *Innocence* triumphant,
 " notwithstanding all the Powerful or Politick Attempts of Men or Devils; a *Patience* unconquerable under the biggest Persecutions; a *Charity* truly Catholick and unlimited; a *Simplicity* and upright Carriage in all Transactions; a *Sobriety* and *Temperance* remarkable to the Admiration of their Enemies; the Divine and Holy Precepts of the Christian Religion drawn
 " down

“ down into *Action*, and the most excellent
“ *Genius* and Spirit of the Gospel breathing
“ in the Hearts and Lives of these good old
“ Christians.——

Ibid. And how thou canst not, bear them
which are Evil.——This Part of our Saviour's
Commendation more particularly respects the
antient Discipline of the Church, which was
very awful and very strict; and no less ef-
fectual to recover the Lapsed, to deter others
from sinning, and to secure the Perseverance
of the Faithful; and so to present to her
Lord a glorious Church, not having Spot, or
Wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should
be Holy, and without Blemish. By this the
Primitive Church maintain'd her Dignity and
Authority, shew'd her infinite Hatred of Sin,
her Care and Zeal to discourage all Iniquity,
to keep Persons within the Bounds of Order
and Regularity, and to preserve that Strict-
ness and Purity of Manners that had ren-
der'd her Religion so venerable and trium-
phant in the World: A Discipline that had
no Respect of Persons, that injoin'd Pe-
nances, greater or less, longer or shorter, ac-
cording to the Nature of the Crime, some-
times for several Years together, and some-
times for the whole Life. Such was the
Discipline of the Ancient Christians, which
procured them this Commendation from
Christ himself, that they could not bear them
which are Evil.

Ibid.

Ibid. *And hast tried them which say they are Apostles, and are not, and hast found them Liars.*—St. Paul in one Passage has some Expressions parallel to this—*Such were false Apostles, deceitful Workers, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ.* But in neither Case are we to suppose that such pretended to be *Apostles indeed*, in the primary and principal Sense of the Word, that is, Persons immediately chosen and sent forth by *Christ himself* in Person. No; none of the false Teachers could have the Vanity to pretend to such a palpable Falsity as this. We are therefore, no doubt, to understand by those that *say they are Apostles and are not*, the *Herefiarchs* of those Days, or the Founders and First Broachers of the several Heresies that infested the Primitive Church, which were very numerous, and which very likely pretended to an immediate Call (not to the very Office of Preaching, but) to the Delivery of the Doctrines they preached or published to the World. Of this *Montanus* in particular was a notorious Instance, and made the highest Pretensions of any Man to Divine Inspiration, and was even thought by his deluded Followers to be the very *Paraclete*, or the Holy Ghost. And though he did not *himself* carry his Heresy to such Extravagance, yet he would have his *Disciples* believe (and *Tertullian* was one of these Believers) that the Holy Ghost spake and taught by his Mouth. But as the Power of discern-
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ing Spirits was one of the miraculous Gifts bestow'd upon the Primitive Church, these and the like Pretensions were soon detected and exposed, and the Spreaders of the Poison mark'd out to the Faithful and Orthodox, by the Writings of the Learned and by the Censures of the Church, which rejected and cut them off from her Communion.

The Rebuke.

Ver. 4. *Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first Love.*——We cannot well suppose that this Rebuke reaches or relates to the *first Christians*, who were before so highly commended for their Patience and Perseverance; but 'tis very applicable to those Christians who lived in the *latter Part* of the *Ephesine State*; who about that Time began to decline, to slacken the Reins of Discipline, and to engage in warm Controversies that eat out the very Heart of Religion. This Declension began to shew itself in some little measure, and in some few particular Churches, even as early as the Days of *St. Clemens Romanus* and *St. Ignatius*, as we may learn from their Epistles; but was more visible and more general a little before the Rise of *Montanism*, the Remissness of Discipline in the Church giving Birth, in some sense, to that rigid Sect. *While Men sleep, the Enemy sows his Tares*; and this very probably was the Occasion that tempted *Tertullian*, a Man of a morose Temper, great Austerity of Manners, and a rigid Reformer, and who made loud Complaints
against

against the Negligence and Supineness of the Church-Governors, to close in at that time with the severe Discipline of *Montanus*. But That which most of all shews the Justness and Seasonableness of our Saviour's Rebuke, and might be the chief Ground of his Complaint that the *Angel* or Bishops of the Church in *Ephesus* had left their first Love, was the *Quartodecimal Controversy*, or the many violent Disputes that arose in the Church about the Time of keeping *Easter*: The Day the Devil so much envied, as being the Birth-day of our Reconciliation to God, being thus, by his Cunning and Malice, turn'd into an Occasion of Strife and Disunion amongst Christians. But then I don't mean the *Beginning* of this Controversy, which the good *St. Polycarp* labour'd to put an end to, but without Success; for then; notwithstanding the Difference of Opinions, the Peace and Unity of the Church was still maintain'd: But I mean the *Revival* of this Controversy by Pope *Victor* towards the latter End of the second Century, who push'd the Matter with great Violence, set all in a Flame, and proceeded to excommunicate whole Churches. And this unhappy Controversy continued more or less in the Church for a long time, and was not fully settled or determined till the first General Council of *Nice*. Well then might our Saviour complain of the latter Christians in the *Ephesine State*, that they had left their first Love; since a Spirit of

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Contention, like a turbulent Wind, always ruffles, and even sometimes quite extinguishes the pure gentle Flame of Charity and Devotion.

To this I may add, that during the Heat of Persecutions, the *Ephesine* Christians receiv'd the Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper* every Day (or as often as they came together for publick Worship) as a Sovereign Antidote against the Fear of Death, and as the best Preparative for Martyrdom. But after the *Ninth* general Persecution, they enjoy'd a profound Peace and Tranquillity for somewhat above forty Years; during which State of Ease and Prosperity, the Manners of Christians began to be corrupted, and the Sacraments to be more rarely frequented. And so from *once a Day* (as it is supposed) it came to be receiv'd only *three* or *four* times in a Week: which Abatement and Decay of the Primitive Zeal and Love (though nothing in comparison of what has since happen'd in these latter Ages of the Church, when instead of *three* times in a *Week*, Christians are contented to Communicate only *three* times in a *Year*) our Saviour here complains of, and threatens to punish. And accordingly God was pleas'd to permit a *Tenth Persecution* to purge away the Dross and Defilements the Christians of those Times had contracted during their former Ease, to rekindle their Zeal, and recal them to their *first Love*.

The Exhortation and Threatning.

Ver. 5. *Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first Works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy Candlestick out of his Place, except thou repent.*—Our Saviour here mercifully warns the latter Christians in the *Ephesine* Church, to consider betimes their former and their present State, the Unity and Intenseness of their *first Love*, and the unchristian Heats and Divisions they were now run into, to remember from what a Pitch of Heroic Piety they were fallen, and to stop the Progress of Apostacy by a speedy Repentance; and to testify the Truth of their Repentance by doing the *first Works*, i. e. by resettling the ancient Discipline, by quitting their unreasonable Animosities, by communicating more constantly, and returning to their *first Love*. Otherwise he threatens very soon to visit their Offences with a Rod, and even to *remove their Candlestick out of his Place*.

Now *Christ's Threatnings* in these Epistles, though express'd *conditionally*, are likewise predictive of what would *certainly* come to pass, as we find by the Event. The most flourishing Church in the Primitive Times was perhaps that of *EPHESUS*, where *St. John* mostly lived in his latter Days, and where he died. Christianity there thrived, as in its *Native Soil*, and grew to a great Height. But whichever of the several Churches in the
Primitive

Primitive Times, or within the Period I assign for the *Ephesine Age*, we suppose to be the *most famous* and flourishing, whether *Rome*, or *Alexandria*, or *Antioch*, or *Ephesus*, or any other, *there* I think we ought to place the *Candlestick*, as symbolically denoting the more peculiar Seat or Residence of the Spirit, or the Enjoyment of the greater Light, and more abundant Unction of the Holy Ghost. Which Eminency or Privilege is to be consider'd as *local* and *moveable*, and the Removal of it as a great *Punishment*. Our Saviour's Threatning therefore to the *Church in EPHESUS* to *remove* her *Candlestick out of his Place*, must imply his Resolution to take away, though not the very *Being* of the Church, yet her Dignity or *Well-Being*, to lessen her Esteem in the World, to destroy her flourishing and prosperous State, and to translate the Glory of it to some other Church. Accordingly we find, that not long after the Expiration of this *first Period* of Christianity, all the *Ephesine Churches*, even *Rome* itself, were really Eclipsed or *Outshone* by that famous new Church erected upon the Ruins of *Paganism* and the Conversion of *Constantine*, at *Byzantium*, call'd afterwards in Honour of him *Constantinople*.

Ver. 6. *But this thou hast, that thou hatest the Deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.*—The *Nicolaitans* were a pestilent and impure sort of Hereticks, that from a mistaken

*A farther Com-
mendation.*

taken Expression of *Nicolas*, one of the seven Deacons, took occasion to run into all manner of Lewdness and Debauchery, and allow'd of the most impudent and scandalous Actions imaginable. This Heresy we may reckon to have spread out into two great Branches, viz. the *Gnosticks* and *Adamites*; the former of which Sects I take to be chiefly meant in this Place, being very numerous, and held in the utmost Abomination by the first Christians, and who still retaining the Name of *Christians*, notwithstanding they lived in perfect Contradiction to it, gave occasion to the Heathens to reflect upon the *Faithful themselves*, as guilty of those very Crimes in their secret Assemblies, which they were known to detest and punish with the utmost Severity.

The General Admonition. Ver. 7. *He that hath an Ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.*——

Here the *Third* Person in the Blessed Trinity is expressly mention'd as concern'd in the *Revelation*; the *Father* and the *Son* are mention'd before; the *Father*, who gave this *Revelation* to *Jesus Christ*, as *Man* or *Mediator*; *Christ* himself, who sent his Angel to notify these Things to the Churches by his Servant *John*; and the *Holy Ghost*, who inspired the Apostle, or aided him in recollecting and penning down what was deliver'd to him by the Message of an Angel. So that here is a Concurrence of all the awful So-

lemnity of Persons that can be expected or required to engage and command our Attention; the *Father*, who vouchsafed to make the wonderful Discovery of these Myſterious Secrets and future Events, that had been *hid from Ages and from Generations*; the *Son*, who communicated the ſame to St. *John*; the *Holy Ghoſt*, who enabled the Apoſtle to tranſmit the ſame to preſent and future Generations; the *Angel*, that brought and deliver'd the Meſſages to him; and the *Apoſtle* himſelf, the favourite and beloved Diſciple of *Jeſus*, who was the Penman and Publiſher of theſe Meſſages to the World. Either of which Great Perſonages (and much more All together) is, ſurely, abundantly ſufficient to rouse our Zeal, to awaken our Attention, and to make us hear what the Lord God has to ſay concerning *the Churches*. And every Church is required to hear what the Spirit ſays to all the reſt, either for Example or for Warning, for Inſtruction or Admonition. And, laſtly, that Nothing might be wanting to encourage and enforce our Attention, a particular *Bleſſing* is pronounced in the firſt Chapter upon *him that readeth*, and upon *them that hear the Words of this Prophecy*.

The Promise. Ibid. *To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the miſt of the Para-diſe of God.*—This Promise has reſpect to the *firſt State* of Man in the Time of his Innocence; and therefore is moſt properly applied to

to the *first Christian Church*, that had *first* most perfectly recover'd the *Image of God* which was lost, and train'd up Persons of the greatest *Innocence* since the Days of *Adam*; and the greatest *Number* of them that the World ever beheld at one time. And therefore the Privilege which was freely granted to *Adam*, is here renew'd and ratified to the *Ephesine Church*, of *eating of the Tree of Life* which is in the midst of the *Paradise of God*: In general I shall here remark, that all the Promises to the Churches, as they are peculiarly suited and adapted to each Church according to their different Works, or according to the Difference of Times, States, and Probations, so they have all respect to some Rights or Privileges to be enjoy'd *before* the final Judgment, or our perfect Consummation and Bliss in Heaven. Thus here *Paradise* is promised to the *Ephesine Christians*, as it was to the *Penitent Thief*. Now whatever we are precisely to understand by *Paradise*, there is no doubt to be made, but there are different Degrees of Honour and Happiness in the *Paradisaical* State, as there will be in the *Heavenly*. The *Tree of Life* possesses the *Highest* Post of Honour, being placed in the midst of the *Paradise of God*, as the *Throne of God* is in the midst of *Heaven*: And therefore to eat of the *Tree of Life* must be the *Highest* Privilege of this State. And this Privilege, whatever it be, must be greater to the *Primitive Christians*, than it can be to

those that follow, as they enter'd sooner and were to continue longer in a State of Separation, even to the Time of the first Resurrection. And That which gives them a Title to the *first Rank* in the Region of *Paradise*, will, by Parity of Reason, entitle them to the same in the *Millennial State*, and afterwards in the *Heavenly Mansions*.

C H A P. III. Ep. II.

An Exposition of Christ's Epistle to the Church in SMYRNA.

*The Meaning
of the Word
SMYRNA.*

Ver. 8. *AND to the Angel of the Church in SMYRNA write.*—*Smyrna* signifies any thing of a pleasing or grateful Smell; which exactly suits the Character of the Christians within this *Second Period*; when the *Blood of the Martyrs* that was shed on every side, became (in a higher Sense than St. Paul intended the Expression) *an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable and well-pleasing unto God.*

*The Beginning
and End of the
Smyranean State.*

The *Æra* of the *Smyranean Church* I take to be the same as the *Æra of the Martyrs*, which commenced with the tenth and last general Persecution, called the *Dioctlesian*, though begun, executed, and carried

ried on at the Instance and expresse Orders of that bitter Enemy of the Christians (in Conjunction with his Colleague *Maximin*) *Galerius*. And this continued for the Space of ten Years and near four Months, or till the Establishment of Christianity by Human Laws in the Days of *Constantine the Great*; which put an end at once to the Persecution of the Christians, and to that *second State of Christianity* which is here denoted by the Church in *Smyrna*.

Nor can we wonder, that *Christ* should so remarkably distinguish this short Space of Time, as to make it stand for the Period of a whole Church, or for the *Seventh* Part of his *Catholick Church* upon Earth, if we only consider the Multitude of Martyrs in those Days, which exceeded in Number all that any Age or Part of the Church had ever seen before or since. There never was indeed in the whole World, so terrible, so long, and so universal a Persecution, as this was. It began at the very first with the Slaughter of *seventeen thousand Men within thirty Days*. In *Egypt* only were slain *one hundred forty and four Thousand*, (the Number of the Sealed) and *seven hundred Thousand* exiled. By this may be guess'd what was done in other Places. This made *Sulpitius Severus* cry out, *that almost the whole World was dyed red with the Blood of the Martyrs*. To prepare the Christians of those Days for this bloody Conflict and fiery Trial, our Saviour in this short E-

pistle urges the most proper and forcible Motives that could be made use of for their Support and Encouragement, as may be seen, *first*, in the Title he here gives himself, and *secondly*, in the Promise he gives the Smyrneans.

Christ's Title.

Ibid. These things saith the First and the Last, which was dead, and is alive.—These things saith the First and the Last; q. d. I was with the first Church, and will be with the last, and consequently with all that come between them, and therefore will not leave thee, nor forsake thee. I am the Almighty, I change not; therefore ye Faithful in the Church of SMYRNA shall not be consumed: For I am present with you to stand by you, and to succour you, to lift up the Hands that hang down, and to strengthen the feeble Knees, that ye faint not in this Warfare. Only be strong and quit yourselves like Men; and I will be your God and your Guide unto Death. For your farther Encouragement consider, that I am He which was dead, and is alive. Look unto me the Great Martyr of the Church, who loved you, and gave Myself for you: Look unto me the Author and Finisher of your Faith, who, for the Joy that was set before me, became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross; and Behold I am alive for evermore, and have the Keys of Hell and of Death, and so Power over these to open and shut; and therefore can restore you to Life again, yea,
to

to an infinitely better Life than you now enjoy ; of which I have given you a sufficient Earnest and Demonstration in having rais'd Myself.

The Commendation.

Ver. 9. *I know thy Works, and Tribulation, and Poverty, (but thou art rich.)*—This and *Philadelphia* are the *only* Churches that are commended without any Rebuke. The *Smyranean* Christians (*of whom the World was not worthy*) struggled a long time under the greatest Hardships and Oppressions, and endured the sharpest and most grievous Persecutions both from *Jews* and *Heathens*. In the midst of these great Trials, they were *as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing ; as poor, yet making many rich ; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things*. The Account we have from History of their incomparable Patience almost surpasses Belief. With the greatest Chearfulness they underwent the most cruel Kinds of Death that the Wit and Malice of their Enemies could invent. They even thirsted after Martyrdom, and courted the Racks and the Flames. *In the Sight of the Unwise they seem'd to perish, but in the Sight of the Lord their Death was precious ; for God proved them, and found them worthy for himself. As Gold in the Furnace he tried them, and receiv'd them as a Burnt-Offering*. But there was some Dross mix'd with the Gold, and among these glorious Martyrs were found

some Revolters: which might, in part, occasion the following Censure.

Ibid. I know the Blasphemy of them which say they are *Jews*, and are not, but are the *Synagogue of Satan*——which may either relate to those who were call'd *Traditores*, i. e. such as had delivered up the Bibles and consecrated Vessels belonging to the Church, and fall'n away in that Day of Trial (about which one or two Councils were held) for *there must be* Persecutions sometimes, as well as *Heresies*, that they who are approv'd may be made manifest. Or else this may refer only to the *Jews*, whom the Word *Synagogue* seems to point out, and who at this Time proved themselves indeed *not to be the true People of God*, but the *Synagogue of Satan*. For they not only instigated, but join'd with the Heathens in this dreadful Persecution, nay, even aided and assisted them in preparing the very Fires that were to burn the Christians. And it might be necessary to remind and warn the *Smyrneans* of this, lest seeing the *Jews* favour'd by the *Roman Emperors*, and themselves under Persecution, they might be tempted to fall away: But when our Saviour assures them that these *Jews*, notwithstanding their Countenance from the Government and their present Prosperity, were no better than *Blasphemers*, and the *Synagogue of Satan*, this was sufficient Encouragement to the Christians to despise alike their Insults and Temptations.

Ver.

The Exhortation.

Ver. 10. *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold, the Devil shall cast some of you into Prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have Tribulation Ten Days.*—In these and the foregoing Words it is very observable, that our Saviour says every thing that may hearten, and avoids saying any thing that may dishearten the Christians under their Trial. He tells them of *Sufferings*, *Imprisonment*, and *Tribulation*; but not a Word directly of *Death*. He speaks of *some*, but takes no notice of the vast *Multitudes*, that were to suffer. So tenderly does he deal with them, and so wisely consult their natural Infirmary. For all Temporal Calamity appears much bigger in the *Expectation*, than in the *Event*; and were we always to know beforehand the full Time and Measure of our Suffering, we should be apt to stagger at the very Prospect of it, and so be less able to bear it. 'Tis therefore a common, though not the constant Method of Providence, to lead Men insensibly, as it were, into Trouble; and by the Endurance of one or more light Afflictions, to prepare and fortify them for greater. Our Saviour likewise here directs the *Smyranean* Christians to consider their Grand Enemy the *Devil*, as the *first Mover* and principal Agent in all the Persecutions of the Church; which might be a means to cool and suppress their Resentments against the *immediate Instruments* of their Sufferings and

and Execution. Once more, He forewarns them of a *Ten Days* Tribulation, but leaves them to understand it either of *common* or *prophetical* Days: Though we that know the Event, can justly apply these Days to no other Period of Time, than that of the *Dio- clesian Persecution*, with which, in every Re- spect and Circumstance, they so exactly agree. Lastly, though he does not think fit to ac- quaint them with the very worst that should happen, he exhorts them however to pro- vide against the worst.

The Promise. Ibid. *Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a*

Crown of Life: with which we may consider that other Motive in the next Verse—*He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the Second Death*: which our Saviour adds, that by two strong Bands or Cords he might tie them fast to their Duty. The Conflict was great, and the Trial hazardous, and their Case required the most forcible Incentives to Faithfulness and Perseverance: And he provides for them accordingly. By the former Motive he ani- mates their Courage, and enlivens their Hope; offers them a Crown, but not one of Laurels, or of Gold, but *a Crown of Life, a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge* has prepar'd for all his faith- ful Soldiers that *fight the good Fight of Faith*, and are willing to lay down their Lives for his sake. For *from the Lord's Hand shall they receive a Beautiful Crown*, which will as
eminently

eminently distinguish the *Martyrs* from other Christians in the next World, as they are distinguish'd by their Sufferings in this. But lest the Promise of future Life should not be sufficient *alone* to overcome the Fear of present Death, he farther endeavours to drive away this Fear from them, by an Object of greater Terror. *He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second Death.* The *first Death* is the Death of the *Body*, the *second* is the Death of *Body* and *Soul* too, in the *Fire that never shall be quenched.* And what would a Man not give or part with in this World, to be *absolutely secure* against this *greatest Evil*? This *absolute Security*, our Saviour plainly intimates, is attainable even here. 'Tis a *present Reward* bestow'd and attending upon the *Martyrs*, before and at the Time of their Execution. Other Christians may go out of the World with a well-grounded Hope, and good Assurance of fleeing from the *Wrath to come*, and escaping the *second Death.* But none but the *Martyrs* can (without an immediate Revelation) be *infallibly sure* of it: But 'tis *their Privilege* and *Prerogative* to know for certain, that they *shall not be hurt of the second Death.* As surely as they lay down their Lives for *Christ's* sake, so surely shall they escape the *second Death.* *He that overcometh*, he that suffereth Martyrdom, *shall not be hurt of the second Death.* Which is the highest Encouragement that can possibly be given to *resist unto Blood*, and to be faithful

ful unto Death; especially if it be consider'd withal, that the necessary and unavoidable Consequence of this, is the sure and certain Attainment of Eternal Life.

The Monitory Conclusion.

Ver. 11. *He that hath an Ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.—*

All and every Christian in the World are deeply concern'd in the Contents of these Epistles, and repeatedly required to give diligent Attention to the Instructions, Exhortations, Promises, and Threatnings of All in general, and of Each One in particular, as Matters of the greatest Moment and Importance. And farther, the continued Repetition of one and the same Warning under each Epistle, imports the great Backwardness of Christians to hear and consider these things, and their Negligence and Averseness to get a right Understanding of them.

C H A P. IV. Ep. III.

An Exposition of Christ's Epistle to the Church in PERGAMUS.

The Mystical Name of the Third Church or State of Christianity.

Ver. 10. *AND to the Angel of the Church in PERGAMUS write.—Pergamus signifies a Tower upon a Hill, lofty and conspicuous, that commands all around, and may be seen afar off;*

off: And so fitly and symbolically represents the Church in her *Eminent* and *Flourishing* State; which was the real Condition of the Church after the Conversion of *Constantine* to the Christian Faith; and to which may very congruously be applied that Prophecy of *Isaiah*——*And it shall come to pass in the last Days, that the Mountain of the Lord's House shall be established in the Top of the Mountains, and shall be exalted above the Hills, and all Nations shall flow unto it.* For here likewise is a Mountain upon a Mountain, a glorious Church erected upon the flourishing State of the Empire, and Christianity establish'd by the Highest Civil Power then in Being. It had gone through Fire and Water, and climb'd up Rocks and Precipices; but now, by the bountiful Favour of Heaven, and miraculous Interposition of Providence, it happily gain'd the Ascendant, and was soon settled upon so firm a Basis, that the *Gates of Hell* have not yet been able to overthrow it, or prevail against it. It has flourish'd more or less ever since under the Protection of Christian Princes. *Kings* have been its *Nursing-Fathers*, and *Queens* its *Nursing-Mothers*.

The Duration of this State. But That *State of Christianity* which relates to, or is denoted by, *Pergamus*, I suppose to have continued no longer than the Fall of the *Western Empire* in the Person of *Augustulus* A. D. 476; this Church, as it rose, so declining all along with the State, till it came

came to its full Period, in the Loss of one Half of the Empire, and Declension of the other.

Christ's Title.

Ibid. These things saith He who hath the sharp two-edged Sword.—This farther confirms what I observ'd above, and plainly shews that the State of the Church represented by *Pergamus*, belongs to that Period of Time I have assign'd for it, and to that only. For then, and not before, was there an *Union* and *Conjunction* of the *Sacred* and *Civil* Powers, of which the *sharp two-edged Sword* is a very proper and significant Emblem, as denoting primarily *Christ* in his *Regal* and *Sacerdotal* Capacity, and now *first* lodging these two Powers in his Church. And this he mentions with a Design that the Church should take particular Notice of it, and not neglect to make use of the awful Authority entrusted with her, and bear neither the *Sword* nor the *Keys* in vain.

The Commendation.

Ver. 13. I know thy Works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's Seat is.—Our Saviour here shews that he is not unrighteous to forget the Works of his faithful Servants, and their Labour of Love; since he takes particular Notice of, and therefore seems willing to make Allowances for, the Disadvantages of their Condition. He tells the Church in *Pergamus*, that he knows their Dwelling to be for the present most unhappily

pily situated, *even where Satan's Seat or Throne is*; that is, at *Byzantium*, an Heathen City, over-run with *Pagan Idolatry*, and consequently a chief Place of Residence for *Satan* and his Worshippers; where we do not find that Christianity was ever planted before. To this City, when new-built, *Constantine* by degrees translated the Glory of *Old Rome*; which, after his signal Victories over all his Enemies, and peaceful Settlement in the Throne, became the Seat of true Religion as well as the Seat of the Empire; and where we have the justest Grounds to fix the *Third Golden Candlestick*.

Ibid. And thou holdest fast my Name, and hast not denied my Faith, even in those Days wherein *Antipas* was my faithful Martyr, who was slain among you, where *Satan* dwelleth.— Every Sentence or Expression here is highly worthy Observation. And thou holdest fast my Name, i. e. my Ancient as well as New Name, my Name from Everlasting, *the Word or Son of God*; that is, thou maintainest the Truth of my Divinity against all Opposers; and in the most Authentick Manner, and in the most numerous and solemn Assembly of the Angels of the several Churches, even at the General Council of *Nice*, hast settled and establish'd the true Profession and Recognition of the Christian Doctrine, and given a Publick Symbol of thy Faith (with regard more particularly to what relates to my *Divine Nature*) as the Ground or Standard of Orthodoxy

doxy to all future Generations. *And hast not denied my Faith, even in those Days, wherein Antipas was my faithful Martyr; i. e. Notwithstanding the Current of the Times against thee, hast still persisted in the Profession and Vindication of the True Faith, even in the Reigns of some of the Arian Emperors, when the Hereticks were highly in Favour, and the Orthodox under Persecution; nay, even then too, when Arianism was come to its highest Pitch, and seem'd to carry all before it, even in the Days wherein Antipas was my faithful Martyr.* This I take to be not a proper, but a fictitious or mystical Name, to denote some eminent Person that, in some sense, may be said to have stood single or Alone, in the midst of an universal Corruption, a Person that every one was against, and he against every one, as the Word signifies: which was truly the Case of the Great Athanasius; of whom it was at last Proverbially said, that *All the World was against Athanasius, and Athanasius against all the World.* This undoubtedly is the Antipas here pointed at, and describ'd by our Saviour, *who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.* But does not this overthrow the former Assertion? No, by no means. As St. John himself was ever reckon'd by the Church in the Number of Martyrs, though he was miraculously deliver'd from the boiling Cauldron of Oil into which he was thrown, and afterwards died a natural Death: So may the
Great

Great Athanasius be justly stiled a *faithful Martyr*, if we only consider that he exposed himself to a thousand Deaths for the sake of Truth, and in Defence of his Saviour; that the falsest and blackest Accusations that the Malice of Men or Devils could invent, were brought against him; that he was charged even with downright Murder, in order to be murder'd himself: But how he confounded his Adversaries to their Face, by producing the very Person he was charged with the Murder of; how he answer'd their Accusations, and escaped their Malice, are Particulars too long to be insisted on in this Place, and which none of the Learned are unacquainted with. 'Tis sufficient to my present Purpose to observe, that the Persecutors of this faithful and courageous Servant of *Christ*, have here a particular Mark of Infamy set upon them by our Lord, *viz.* that though the *Pagan Idolatry* was now put down and abolish'd, yet, by reason of the great Prevalence of the *Arian Heresy*, the faithful Christians are said to live still *where Satan dwelleth*; a plain and strong Intimation, that *Arianism* is as much a *Satanical Delusion*, as even *Paganism* itself. It is farther observable from the Commendation here given to the Church in *PERGAMUS*, during these Days of Corruption, that by the *Church* we are all along to understand the *Best and Purest* Part of the Church for the Time being; not any Corrupt or *Heretical* Part, how large,

extensive, or prevailing soever for a Time, with which *the True Church of Christ* is no farther concern'd, than as abetting, or suffering, or conniving at the same, when in her Power to hinder or put a stop to it; which we find reprov'd accordingly.

The Rebuke. V. 14, 15. *But I have a few things against thee; because thou*

hast there them that hold the Doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the Children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to Idols, and to commit Fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the Doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.——

The Ground and Occasion of this Complaint of our Saviour I take to be this—When *Christianity* was newly established, and *Paganism* but just upon the Decline, too many weak Christians were persuaded by the Allurements of some such Counsellors as *Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a Stumbling-block before the Children of Israel*, to partake of the Sacrifices made at the Idol-Temples, and other Heathen Rites; which Practice was not then vigorously restrain'd, or so duly censured as it ought to have been. The *Christian Emperors*, who had the Power in their Hands, did not abolish *Paganism* all at once, but only by Degrees. Though some of them order'd the Temples to be shut up, yet others either caused or suffered them to be open'd; and Idolatry to be practis'd publicly, and All of them privately. Which open Allowance

lowance or Connivance of theirs drew Many into sinful Compliances, and even to commit Fornication and other Uncleanneſſes, commonly allowed of and practiſed by the Hea-then. To which may be added, that the diſtinguiſhing Marks of Favour and Honour, which were now conferr'd upon the Governors of the Church, began ſenſibly to ſoften and corrupt that Holy Severity which had ſo long flouriſh'd amongſt them. [At this time the Diſcipline of the Church was very much relaxed, in return, as it were, for the large Endowments receiv'd from King's and Emperors.]

The Exhortation and Threatning.

Ver. 16. *Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight againſt them with the Sword of my Mouth.*——

The Repentance here required of the Angel of the Church in PERGAMUS, and of thoſe under his Care, was to put a ſtop to the Impieties and Enormities before complain'd of (ſubſiſting chiefly in the Beginning of this Period) and to revive the ancient Diſcipline. Otherwiſe *Chriſt* threatens to viſit the Angel ſpeedily, and to puniſh the Delinquents with the Sword of his Mouth: which we may reaſonably ſuppoſe to have been effectually done at the famous Council of *Nice*, in which the Civil and Spiritual Powers were happily united; and in which Matters relating to Government and Diſcipline, as well as to Do-

ctrine and Worship, were fully settled and established.

The usual Admonition.

Ver. 17. *He that hath an Ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.—*

There seem to be two Reasons, why in Every Epistle we are commanded to hear what the Spirit saith, not to *this* or *that particular Church* only, but to *the Churches in general*. The first is, that Each Church is taken *Collectively*, to denote all the several Christian Churches within such a Period of Time, or State of Christianity; so that what is spoken to One, is spoken to All, and what belongs to One, belongs to All. The second is, that all the *succeeding* Churches to the End of the World, are some way or other concern'd in what is written to each Church; so that the Spirit, in speaking to the Present, speaks, in a manner, to all that are to follow. Thus in particular what is here written to the Church in PERGAMUS, has a manifest Relation to the State and Condition of all the Churches that have been since, or ever shall be in the World. *He therefore that hath an Ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.*

The Promise.

Ibid. *To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden Manna, and will give him a white Stone, and in the Stone a new Name written, which no Man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.—*

The Reward here promised consists of two Parts,

Parts, one present, and the other future. The *present* Reward to him that overcometh, or that *fights the good Fight of Faith*, and (as the State of this Period particularly requires) maintains the Truth of *Christ's Divinity*, is to *eat of the hidden Manna*; which in general may be thus explain'd: that as the *outward Manna* was rain'd down upon the *Israelites* in the Wilderness, and till they came into the Land of *Canaan*, to sustain them under, and to supply the Want of other Food; so *Christ* will rain down on the Soul of *him that overcometh* (though outwardly oppress'd) *inward Joy and Comfort*, to sustain him under his Sufferings and during his Abode here on Earth. But wherein this *inward Joy and Comfort* does precisely consist, no Expositor that I know of has yet attempted to explain. I shall therefore shew very briefly, what I take to be the true Meaning of this Expression. Now considering the Circumstances of the Case, the Privilege of partaking of the *hidden Manna* must imply or denote a full and comfortable Assurance, or *absolute Certainty of being on the side of Truth* in professing and contending for the Doctrine of *Christ's Divinity*; which is equivalent, or rather superior to all the Acknowledgments and Applauses of the World, even as *Manna* was equal to, if not exceeding, all other Food. And whoever has been so happy as to have had the Experience, must know that there can't well be a greater Comfort or En-

ment, than to be *absolutely sure* of a Truth (and that too one of the highest Importance) that is *every where spoken against*, that is almost universally oppos'd, discountenanced, and condemned, as was the Case of those Times, and may be so again. Sure I am that our Saviour thought this a Matter of great Comfort, when he pronounced *Simon Peter* Blessed for making this very Confession, in the midst of Ignorance and Unbelief, viz. that he was *the Christ, the Son of the Living God*.——*Blessed art thou Simon Barjona, for Flesh and Blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven.* It will perhaps be objected, that a Man in Error may have as strong an Assurance in his own Mind, and be as fully persuaded of being in the right, as he that after the best and most impartial Inquiry embraces and espouses the Truth; and so will become equally entitled to the Benefits of this Promise. But not to mention other Differences between the two Cases, it may suffice here to observe, that an erroneous Person is always eager to propagate his Notions, and commonly pursues them with a bitter Zeal and furious Opposition to All Others: whereas the Man of Truth and Sincerity is content to think by Himself, and is not *hasty* to impose his Thoughts upon others, according to That of St. Paul, *Hast thou Faith? Have it to thyself before God*; and so is always *satisfied from himself*, enjoying that sweet Serenity, and well-grounded

grounded Complacency of Mind, which always attend the Lovers and Followers of Truth; who taste of the *hidden Manna* in a way that is unspeakable, and utterly unknown to the Broachers and Spreaders of Error.

2. The *future* Reward is represented by a *white Stone*, and a *New Name* written on that Stone, *which no Man knows but he that receives it*; which is spoken in Allusion to the common Games among the *Romans*, in which the Judges gave a Ticket to the *Victors* to receive the Reward that belong'd to them; the Value or Quality whereof, together with their Names, was written on the said Ticket. But what the Ticket or *New Name* of the *Christian* Conquerors particularly signifies, I shall not presume to explain or conjecture, since 'tis here expressly declar'd, that *No One knows it but he that receives it*.

CHAP. V. Ep. IV.

*An Exposition of Christ's Epistle to the Church
in THYATIRA.*

*The Name of the
fourth Church
explain'd.*

Ver. 18. *AND unto the An-
gel of the Church
in THYATIRA write.*—

THYATIRA, according to the Etymology of the Word, imports *Sacrifice*; which is the antient Name to denote all kind

of Religious Worship, whether *pure* or *corrupt*. Here I suppose it stands for both; the former belonging to this Church so far as the first Part of her Character reaches, in which she receives Commendation from *Christ*, and the latter for all the remaining Part, in which she stands reproved and condemned, as suffering Innovations in the antient Faith and Worship, or as adding the Inventions of Men to the pure Worship of God, which brought upon her the Guilt both of Sacrilege and Idolatry; as we shall see, when we come to consider the Rise and Progress of *Popery*, which is so plainly set forth in this Epistle.

*The Period of
this Church.*

Accordingly we may date the *Æra* of this Church from the Downfal of the *Western* Empire *A. D.* 476; and reckon that it came to its full Period about the Time of the *Dark Age*, that is, in the Middle of the *Ninth* or Beginning of the *Tenth* Century; when Superstition and Ignorance met together and kissed each other.

Christ's Title.

Ibid. These things saith the Son of God, who hath his Eyes like unto a Flame of Fire, and his Feet like unto fine Brass.——By this Title our Saviour reminds the *Thyatirians*, with whom they had to do, and to whom they must give an Account, even to the true and proper Son of God, of the same Nature and Substance with the Father; and therefore that they should be careful both in the outward Acts of Worship,

ship, and the inward Devotion of the Heart, by the Soundness of their Faith, and the Purity of their Lives, to acknowledge his real and essential Divinity; who is of purer Eyes than to behold Evil with the least Approbation, and yet of such piercing Eyes too, even *Eyes like unto a Flame of Fire*, that he cannot but behold it, and will severely punish it; being able, by his Divine Omniscience, to penetrate into all the inmost Recesses of the Soul, and to bring to open Light all the subtle Disguises, and all the first Springs of Heresy and Superstition; and withal being unalterably determin'd to stand by the *everlasting Gospel* he has caus'd to be publish'd to the World, without any Additions to it, or Diminutions from it; which he sufficiently intimates by saying that his *Feet are like unto fine Brass*, this Expression denoting both the Firmness and Purity of his Purposes, and his Strength to accomplish them. And therefore it highly concern'd the Church in *Thyatira* to *stand in the Ways and see, and ask for the old Paths; where is the good Way* their Forefathers *walk'd in*, that they might walk in the same, and *find Rest for their Souls*?

The Commendation,
Ver. 19. *I know thy Works, and Charity, and Service, and Faith, and thy Patience, and thy Works, and the last to be more than the first.*—All the Particulars of this Commendation, except the last, principally relate to the first and purer State of the Church in *Thyatira*,

Thyatira, that is, till *A. D.* 606, when the Tyrant *Phocas* made his Grant to *Boniface III.* Bishop of *Rome*; whereby that Bishop was declar'd universal Bishop, and his Church the Head of all Churches, and he thereupon claim'd to himself that Supremacy, which he has since usurp'd over the Church of *Christ*. And here the noted *Æra* of *Popery* is commonly fix'd. Before this, and for some time after, the *Thyatirian* State of the Church was remarkable (as our Saviour here foretels) for Works of *Piety*, and *Charity*, and *Faith*, and *Patience*. The Christians of those Times were zealous, diligent, and assiduous to plant Christianity in distant Parts, to convert the Heathens, and to confirm those that were newly converted. Instances of this might be given in abundance; but to mention only a few Particulars, chiefly in relation to Ourselves. *Austin* and other zealous Monks were sent over by *Gregory* Bishop of *Rome* about *A. D.* 596, to preach the Gospel in *England*; and were the happy Instruments of planting Christianity here, and converting the *English-Saxons*, and of erecting several Bishopricks and Churches. *Constantine* and *Columba* preach'd the Gospel in *Scotland*. *St. Patrick* labour'd 60 Years in converting the Natives of *Ireland*, and founded no less than 365 Churches. *Willibroad*, an *English* Priest, made a considerable Progress in converting the People of *West-Friseland*, and erected several Churches and Monasteries: And in the
Eighth

Eighth-Century, Christianity was so well established in *England*, and Religion was so deeply rooted in the Hearts of Men, that no less than three Kings in *England*, viz. *Cenred*, *Offa*, and *Ina*, quitted their Crowns, and betook themselves to a Monastick Life, spending the Remainder of their Days in Acts of Self-Denial, Charity, and Devotion.

Another Instance of the Piety and Charity of the *Thyatirians*, though already noted by the way, was the great Care and Expence they were at in building Churches, Hospitals, Monasteries, Colleges, and other Religious Houses; which Works our Saviour would not commend them for, if they had not been acceptable in his Sight; which they most certainly are, so long as they are not abused to Superstition. Nay, he tells us that their *last Works were more than the first*; which is manifestly true of those that embraced the *Popish* Errors in the middle and latter Parts of the *Thyatirian* State; none having been more zealous and forward, than the *Papists* are known to have been all along, to erect and beautify Churches, and to use all Means and Methods of advancing Piety and Religion in their own way. And it must be acknowledged, that 'tis to their Zeal, Piety, and Liberality that we owe many Colleges and Halls in our two famous Universities, and most of the Churches we have now in this Island; and the Oldest of them perhaps we may find, upon Enquiry, to have been

been founded within that Period of Time I call the *Thyatirian*. In short, *Thyatira*, as the Word imports, and the State of Christianity in those Days plainly shews, is the true Representative or Pattern of *outward* Holiness, as *Smyrna* and *Ephesus* were of the *inward*. Those were poor in the Eye of the World, but rich unto God: This, though not destitute neither of the inward Graces, was yet (as she had Power) more intent upon what I may call the *Accommodations* and *Ornaments* of Religion, and to the Power of Godliness added the Splendor of the World: This being the first Christian Church or State of Christianity, in which that remarkable Prophecy was fulfill'd in part—*The King's Daughter is all glorious within, her Cloathing is of wrought Gold*. *Pergamus* indeed began this *Cloathing* of Religion, but was stopt in her Design, and render'd unmeet for the Attempt, by the Religious Broils and Controversies that divided and distracted her. It was an Honour and Privilege reserv'd for more peaceful Times in the Church, and particularly for the laborious Church in *Thyatira* to carry on and finish the outward Building, and to be deck'd at once with Spiritual Gifts and Temporal Grandeur. And Both doubtless, when they can be enjoy'd together, are highly commendable and greatly desirable; though it may be necessary to caution the weaker Christians, that the External Pomp do not draw off their Minds from *the Better Part*,

Part, and make them rest in the Form, and lose the Substance.

The Rebuke. Ver. 20. Notwithstanding I have a few things (or somewhat) against thee, because thou suffereſt that Woman (or thy Wife) Jezebel, who calls herself a Prophetess, to teach and to seduce my Servants to commit Fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto Idols. — Jezebel, in the Figure, stands for a Patroness and Promoter of false and idolatrous Worship, and a Persecutor of the true Worshippers of God: And, as such, is an Eminent Type of the Woman that sits upon many Waters, even the Church of Rome, who also calls herself a Prophetess, that is, inspired, and lays claim to a Right which Christ never promised her, to a Privilege too big indeed for sinful Mortals, viz. to be the Infallible Judge of Controversy and Supreme Head of the Catholick Church. The Jewish Jezebel was a Heathen by Birth, of Sidonian Extraction, and when married to Ahab, introduced the Worship of Baal the Idol-God of the Sidonians among the Children of Israel: The Christian Jezebel, of a Heathen Original too, has introduced the Pagan Idolatry into the Christian Worship; Popery being nothing else but Paganism transform'd, and put into a Christian Dress. The old Jezebel slew as many of the Prophets of the Lord as she could lay her Hands upon, and would have slain Elijah too, if God had not wonderfully preserv'd

serv'd him. And 'tis owing to the same tender Care and Protection of Providence, that all the Protestant Pastors have not been cut off by the *new Jezebel*: who is here more particularly condemn'd by Christ for *teaching and seducing his Servants to commit Fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto Idols*. This may be meant of *carnal* as well as *spiritual* Fornication; since this is tolerated, if not allow'd of in some Cases by the *Papists*, and call'd a *Venial Sin*: Though in those early Days, in the Dawnings of Popery, we may reasonably suppose that our Saviour's Rebuke regards principally, if not solely, the Introduction or first setting up of *spiritual* Fornication in the Church: which began to be practis'd not long after the *Roman Bishop* was declared the *Supreme and Universal Bishop* by an Imperial Constitution. The Invocation of Saints and Angels in both Parts of the Empire crept in insensibly; and then follow'd the Worship of Images, which being the Height of Folly and Idolatry was last settled. This was done in the *West* by Pope *John VII*, who in the Year 705 set up Images in the Churches, and order'd that they should be worshipp'd; upon which, Image-Worship was soon spread throughout the Empire in the *East* as well as *West*.

It may not be amiss here to take some brief notice of the first Rise and gradual Increase of this Image-Worship in the Church. Images then at first were designed to be no other
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than the Descriptions and Pictures of *Virtues*; after that they came to be Representations of *Persons*, but then only of *Christ* in his Humanity, or of the *Saints*, and these modestly confin'd to Houses, or profane Places, and not yet suffer'd in the Church. About 300 Years after this they found Entrance (though not without Opposition) into some Churches, but still only for an *Historical Use*, to revive the Remembrance of past Transactions. After this, beside the *Historical Use* to refresh the Memory and inform the Understanding, they acquired also a *Rhetorical Use* to stir up Devotion: And *Gregory the Great*, though he did not approve of *worshipping* of them, yet allow'd *worshipping before* them. This *Worshipping before* them, in the second Council of *Nice* gain'd them the Honour, though not of *Adoration*, yet of *Veneration*; and this Veneration in the End by *Aquinas* and others, came to be interpreted *Adoration*. And this Notion and Use of them has continued in the Church of *Rome* ever since. Behold here, how great a Matter a little Fire kindleth! And if we trace every other Heresy in that Church to its Fountain-Head, we may probably find it to have sprung originally from some laudable, innocent, or indifferent Usage in the Primitive Church, and passing through the corrupt Channels of succeeding Ages, came at last to assume that monstrous Form it now bears. Or whatever may be said of the Human Understanding in this respect, we
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are sure that the Divine Knowledge of our Saviour enabled him to trace all these Mysteries of Iniquity *ab Ovo*, and to discover them in the Conception and Birth. Accordingly he represents himself in this Epistle as having *Eyes like unto a Flame of Fire*, and as *he that searcheth the Reins and the Heart*; i. e. as he that could discern the sowing and first springing of the *Tares* in his Church; and therefore foretels and gives Warning of them, and blames the Bishops and Pastors of the Church in *Thyatira* for not duly regarding the first Appearances, and not stopping the Beginnings of these Corruptions; for instance, for not vigorously opposing the insolent Pretensions of the Church of *Rome* in claiming a Supremacy over all other Churches, and for suffering her to seduce his faithful Servants by imposing her Innovations in Doctrine and Worship upon them, especially with regard to Spiritual Fornication or Idolatry, a thing so odious and provoking in the Eyes of a Jealous God.

Ver. 21. *And I gave her space to repent of her Fornication, and she repented not.* — This is spoken of *Jezabel*, or of the corrupt Church represented by her; and the Words seem to imply that *Christ*, in his own eternal Purpose, had fix'd and appointed a certain Time of Patience and Forbearance, to wait the Amendment and Reformation of this Idolatrous Church: which however he foresaw they would abuse, or neglect to improve. When
this

this Time is past, her Judgment is come, and she can no longer hope for Mercy. She has now continued (if we date the *Æra of Popery* from *A. D. 606*) 1134 Years; and how much longer the Divine Forbearance will spare her, is a Secret known only to God. However, she has Reason to be alarm'd at every fresh War that breaks out, and to think herself in no little Danger.

The Threatning. Ver. 22, 23. *Behold, I will cast her into a Bed, and them that commit Adultery with her into great Tribulation, except they repent of their Deeds. And I will kill her Children with Death, and all the Churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the Reins and Hearts: And I will give unto every one of you according to your Works.*—

The *Bed* is a Symbol either of a State of Sleep or *Insensibility*, and so may denote the Blindness and Infatuation of the Church of *Rome*, and her not knowing the Day of her Visitation; which therefore will be the more dreadful and surprising, for coming sudden and unexpected: Or else of a State of great *Tribulation*, there being a *Bed* of *Sickness* as well as of *Ease*. To be cast into this *Bed*, imports it to be such a State as Men would not chuse; and it must be a great Aggravation of Grief to be tormented in that where Men seek Rest. The Case of the *Romanists*, when God visits them, will be something like that mention'd by the *Psalmist*, the Things that should have been for their

Wealth, will prove unto them an Occasion of falling; and as St. James farther observes, be a Witness against them, and eat their Flesh as it were Fire. Their Pride and Luxury, their Tyranny and Cruelty, by which they have so remarkably distinguish'd themselves, will hasten and prepare the Way for this heavy Judgment: The Dreadfulness, the Suddenness, and Completeness of which, we have describ'd by the Prophets in the Old Testament in the Fall of Babylon, and by St. John in the 17th and 18th Chapters of this Book; to which I refer the Reader, only observing here two Things. 1. That when this great Event shall happen, then all the Churches shall know that Christ is he which searcheth the Reins and the Heart; i. e. who foresaw and foretold these things, and even the very first Steps and Beginnings of that great Apostasy, which should call down so terrible a Vengeance: And who, at that time too, will very likely make as remarkable a Distinction between the faithful Protestants, and the Antichristian Papists, as he did formerly between the Jews and Christians at the Destruction of Jerusalem; which he seems to intimate in these Words, I will give unto every one of you according to your Works (or this may imply some Distinction to be made between the more Moderate in the Romish Communion, and the Bigotted Zealots.) But before this fatal Catastrophe, 'tis not improbable but that the Church or Court of Rome will be visited with
some

some lesser Judgments, as Warnings or Pre-
ludiums of its approaching Dissolution.

2. That in this Epistle there are two eminent *Types* of the Nature of the Destruction here foretold, and against what particular Church it is design'd. The first is *Jezabel*, who perish'd miserably, falling at once from the Height of Imperiousness to the Depth of Ignominy and Wretchedness, being thrown out of a Window and eaten by Dogs; so that not only her Form, but her very Carcase was extinguish'd, there being no Remains left of her Body, but some for Tokens of the Certainty of her Death, the Skull, the Feet, and the Palms of her Hands, and her Blood spilt upon the Walls; so that none could say, *This is Jezabel*. And such will be the Fate of that Proud City that now lords it over the World. In one Hour her Judgment shall come, and she shall be *found no more*. 3. The other Type is *Thyatira* itself, the Representative here of the *Roman Church*, which has suffer'd a *total Ruin*, the most finish'd and complete of all the Seven Churches; there being not so much as the Memory of the Town left, or any Monument that shews there has been such a Town, but only some slender Remains of Inscription hard to be found, like the Skull, Feet, Hands, and the Blood of *Jezabel*. A rueful Emblem of the final Excision of *Rome*!

The Exhortation.

Ver. 24, 25. *But unto you I say, the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this Doctrine, and which have not known the Depths of Satan, as they speak, I will put upon you none other Burden; but this, what ye have already, hold fast till I come.*—This Exhortation contains a most endearing Encouragement to the well-meaning Christians in *Thyatira*, and is a lively Instance of the great Tenderneſs, Compaſſion, and Condeſcenſion of our Bleſſed Redeemer towards the Faithful in all Ages. For here he makes all reaſonable Abatements for the Iniquity of the Times, and the Frailty of Human Nature; and requires no more, and will lay no more upon them, than the Times will bear. If they only take care to abſtain from *Spiritual Fornication*, the Doctrine of *Jezabel*, and the Thing which he *more particularly hates*; and are not concern'd in the wicked Intrigues and Cabals of the Court of *Rome*, that aim at nothing elſe but raiſing and aggrandizing themſelves by all the pious Frauds, lying Miracles, bloody Perſecutions, and other abominable Methods (which the Aſſertors of them call the *Depths of God and Religion*, but are in truth the *Depths of Satan*;) If, I ſay, the Faithful in *Thyatira* would keep themſelves undefiled from theſe foul Blots and great Offences of the Church of *Rome*, *Chriſt* promiſes to put upon them no other Burden but this, *What ye have already, hold faſt till I come*: i. e. whatever

ever the State of Religion was at that time; whatever the faithful *Thyatirians* did then profess and practise, though it did not come up to the Purity and Perfection of the *Primitive Pattern*, or even equal what their *immediate* Forefathers had done before them, our Saviour here promises nevertheless to accept of and reward; and only requires them to hold fast and persevere in the same, without admitting or complying with the greater Abominations of the *Romanists*. Great Numbers of such well-disposed Men always have been (and especially in those early Days) in the Church of *Rome*, that were not tainted with, but rather bewail'd in secret, and would have been glad to reform (if it had been in their Power) the grosser Errors and Corruptions of that Church. The Christian World is beholden to many of these for their admirable Works of Piety and Devotion. Such are the Men at this Day, who groaning under the Tyranny and Bondage of the Court of *Rome*, which so corrupts their Church, wait for Deliverance from that Corruption into the glorious Liberty of the Children of God. These are no Disturbers of Christian States and Kingdoms, no Flatterers of the Papal Chair, none of those Sons of Pride and Bigotry, who are for damning and burning Hereticks; but Men of great Piety and Peaceableness, and endued with many excellent Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Now to all such of the *Ramish* Communion as these, not only

that lived in the *Thyatirian* State, but that shall live in any succeeding State to the World's End, our Saviour's Exhortation is plainly directed, and truly applicable: *What ye have already, hold fast till I come*; i. e. till my Second Coming to judge the World, till near which the *Papal Usurpation* will continue. And for their Encouragement to do so, here follows a glorious Promise.

The Promise. Ver. 26, 27, 28. *And he that overcometh, and keepeth my Works unto the End, to him will I give Power over the Nations: (And he shall rule them with a Rod of Iron; as the Vessels of a Potter shall they be broken to shivers) even as I receiv'd of my Father: And I will give him the Morning-Star.*—In these Words there are two distinct Promises, though dependant on one another: And Nothing can be more suitable and more encouraging than these Promises to the Pious and Moderate of the *Romish* Persuasion in all Ages, especially during the first Advances of Popery in the *Thyatirian* State. For that which gave Birth to the Apostasy was a Desire of *Supremacy*, and that which the *Romanists* in every Age have most strenuously contended for, is the *Papal Supremacy*, that is, in *Christ's* Language, to have *Power over the Nations, and to rule them with a Rod of Iron*. Now our Saviour here seems ready to gratify their Ambition at a proper Season, and to grant them the utmost of their Desire upon certain Conditions, and that

that too in more direct and express Terms than he did his Disciples *James* and *John*, who desired to sit the one on his Right Hand, and the other on his Left in his Kingdom. For he tells them plainly, that if they *overcome and keep his Works unto the End*, i. e. keep themselves unspotted from the great Corruptions of Popery, they shall have this *Power over the Nations*, and *rule them with a Rod of Iron*, and *break them to shivers like a Potter's Vessel*; and that too as certainly and as fully (in due Proportion and Subordination) as he had *receiv'd* the same Power *from his Father*. A most extensive and engaging Promise *ad Hominem*: which however they were not to hope for before the Commencement of the *Millennial State*, to which the latter Promise has a plain Reference.—*And I will give him the Morning-Star*.—The *Morning-Star* is the Symbol of the first Resurrection: *Christ* in the latter Part of the *Revelation* calls himself the *Morning-Star*, as he rose *before* the General Resurrection, and as he was the *First* that rose from the Dead, never again to return to the Grave. And therefore the Promise of giving the *Morning-Star* must imply, that those who are entitled to it shall rise, as *Christ* did, before the General Resurrection, and be Partakers of the first Resurrection, in order to enjoy the *Millennial State*; which State, or Reign of the Saints upon Earth, as it is to be without Night, is frequently call'd a *Day*, or the *Day*,

Day, or the great Day, and the like; and the Beginning of it is well denoted by the *Morning-Star*, commonly so called from ushering in the Day. The plain Meaning then of this and the other Promise is, that the faithful *Thyatirians*, and all those of the *Roman* Communion that hold fast their Integrity in the midst of an over-bearing Corruption, shall have a Part in the glorious Reign of the Saints upon Earth, from its very Beginning, and so during the whole Reign of a Thousand Years, have Power or Dominion over the Nations.

The Monitory Conclusion. Ver. 29. *He that hath an Ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.—*

i. e. It highly concerns every Christian carefully to attend to what the Spirit saith unto the Churches from this Time to the End of the World, as they will all from this Time be tainted more or less with the Errors and Corruptions of the Church of *Rome*. 'Tis farther observable, that in the three first Epistles this Injunction goes before the Promise; but in this and the three last, the Promise before the Injunction: The Reason may be, that the three first States of Christianity were always in readiness to obey, and forward of themselves to perform whatever they knew to be their Duty, and therefore wanted but little Spur or Encouragement; but the latter, by the Degeneracy of the Times, stood in need likewise of some Promise, Motive,
or

or Encouragement to excite 'em to a zealous Performance; and therefore the Promise of a peculiar Reward is placed before the Command.

C H A P. VI. Ep. V.

An Exposition of Christ's Epistle to the Church in SARDIS.

Ch. iii. Ver. 1. *AND unto the Angel of the Church in Sardis write.*—SARDIS in Syriac signifies a *Shield*; which is a Piece of *defensive* Armour, to cover and guard the Body against an Assault; and singly or by itself is only sufficient to preserve Life, or to secure a Man against a mortal Wound: And so fitly represents that almost universal Decay of Religion, that general Corruption of Manners, and that low State of Christianity that succeeded the *Thyatirian*, and preceded the *Philadelphian*. For the Church in *Sardis* was wholly upon the *Passive* and *Defensive*, having lost, or laid aside, or neglected to use the *Offensive* Weapon, viz. the *Sword of the Spirit*, which is the *Word of God*. She had *Faith* enough (which was her *Shield*, from whence she is denominated) to quench some of the fiery Darts of the Wicked, but not enough to
make

*The Meaning
of the Word
SARDIS.*

make head against him or his Agents; to keep her from a total Apostasy, but not enough to produce a sincere or universal Obedience; to support the Profession, but not to maintain the Power of Christianity. Such was the forlorn Case, and melancholy State of the Church of *Christ* in that dark Age (call'd by Historians the *iron, leaden, obscure Age*) in the Ninth and Tenth Century, and some that follow'd: For though, after this, Learning in some measure revived, yet Religion still continued at a very low Ebb, till the Dawnings of that illustrious Day, which open'd and distinguish'd the *Philadelphian* State, began to appear in the zealous Opposers of the *Papal Usurpation*, so particularly taken notice of by our Saviour in this Epistle.

The long Duration of this Church.

Now this corrupt Church in *Sardis*, I suppose to have continued 600 Years, that is, from the Beginning of the Ninth to the End of the Fourteenth Century; so that this State of the Christian Church was the longest as well as the darkest, and may not unfitly be term'd the *long Night of Christianity*.

Christ's Title.

Ibid. These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven Stars.——As the *seven Stars* plainly denote the whole Body of Christian Pastors, *collectively* taken; so, by Parity of Reason, the *seven Spirits of God* must signify

nify all the several Orders of Angels under the Conduct and Direction of seven special Angels of greater Eminency than the rest, or such as we thence style in one word *Arch-angels*. *Christ's having these* denotes his having *all Power in Heaven and in Earth*; that he is, in his Human Nature, exalted far above the highest Orders of Angels in Heaven, and is the Head of all Church-Governors upon Earth; that the former are under his immediate Government, and wholly at his Command, being *ministring Spirits sent forth to minister unto them that are Heirs of Salvation*; and that the latter are under his special Care, Cognizance, and Protection, and receive from him the Gifts of the Spirit to quicken and support them in their Duty; and therefore they had no Reason to be afraid of any Danger, or to stop at any Difficulty, knowing who would be their Guide and Defender. The mention likewise of the *seven Stars* to this Church may imply, that though she was miserably corrupt and degenerate, and drawn to the very Dregs, yet she was not the *last* Church or State of Christianity that was to appear in the World, since there were *two* others still to follow: And the mention of the *seven Spirits of God* may also import, that *each* different State of the Church has a *particular* distinct Angel, even one of the seven chief Angels to preside over it, to whose Care and Administration, in general,

Christ

Christ has committed the Affairs of all the Churches.

The Reproof. Ibid. *I know thy Works, that thou hast a Name, that thou livest, and art dead.*—— i. e. The Church in *Sardis* thought herself to be a sound Part of *Christ's* Church, but she was mistaken: she was dead, while she lived: she had a Name to live, but as to all the Purposes of living, she was as if she had been dead. The Truth of this is abundantly clear from History. The Christians of that Age had miserably perverted and polluted the pure Doctrines of the Gospel, and their Manners were agreeable to their Doctrine. The corrupted Churchmen, and particularly the Church of *Rome*, were wholly intent upon acquiring Riches by all manner of base Ways and Impositions. And these Riches became the Cause of the Decay of Piety, and of horrid Luxury, which produced therein all manner of Crimes and Idolatries; and no Man could say any thing against the established Corruptions without exposing himself to Persecutions. The *Crusades* likewise that commenced and were carried on during this Period, under Pretence of recovering the *Holy Land*, brought an Inundation of Vice upon *Christendom*, and involv'd the Church in a Deluge of Wickedness, in unheard-of Murders, Massacres, and abominable Impieties.

The Exhortation. Ver. 2, 3. *Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die. For I have not found thy Works perfect before God. Remember therefore what thou hast receiv'd and heard, and hold fast, and repent.*—The Angel of the Church in *Sardis* is here admonish'd to awaken from such a supine lifeless State, and to strengthen both himself and others, to stir up within him the Graces which were in Danger of being utterly extinguish'd, and to preserve those from the general Contagion that were not yet fall'n into the like enormous deadly Sins, but ready to fall, if not strengthen'd with proper Advice and seasonable Exhortation. For his Works, upon account of their not being accompanied with Sincerity, and not being agreeable to all the Rules of the Gospel (the Generality of the Members of this Church contenting themselves with observing some Rules of the Gospel, and having no Regard to the rest) were not found to be compleat and perfect, but far otherwise, in the sight of God. He is therefore directed to recollect and remember after what manner he had at first embraced Christianity, and after what manner the Doctrines thereof were committed to him, and to hold fast, or adhere closely to the Rule of Faith and Manners he had been instructed in, and to repent of the Crimes he had been guilty of in his Deviations from it, and

and to call upon such as were faulty to repent likewise.

The Threatning. Ver. 3. *If therefore thou shalt*

not watch, I will come on thee as a Thief, and thou shalt not know what Hour I will come upon thee.—— i. e. If the Angel

did not watch over himself and his Flock to correct and amend what they are before blamed for, *Christ* threatens that a very sudden and severe Judgment should overtake him; that he would come against him unawares, and surprise him in the deadly State he was in, at an Hour he knew not, even as a Thief comes in the dead Time of the Night, when the Master and Family are fast asleep. Now the *Sardian* Pastors and People not taking the Warning here given, but growing rather worse and worse, and proceeding at last even to Civil Wars among themselves, this Threatning seems most evidently to have been fulfill'd by the Destruction of the *Greek Church*, or the Fall of the *Grecian State* at the Taking of *Constantinople* by *Mahomet II.* A. D. 1453. For it is to be noted, that the *Roman Empire* being dismember'd by the Irruption of the *Barbarous Nations*, the *Eastern Empire* from that time had both the Name and kept up the Pretensions of the antient *Roman Empire*. And therefore the Threatning being directed to the Christians in those Parts, or to that chief Part of *Christendom*, was actually and exactly fulfill'd at the Time aforementioned by the sudden Conquest

quest of *Mahomet II*, who with an Army of near four hundred thousand Men took *Constantinople*; and from that time went on conquering till he ruin'd all the Power of the *Eastern Empire*, in all the Parts thereof, and that so effectually, that not one Monarchy of those Christian Princes which formerly possess'd it, was excepted from the common Ruin; the *Ottomans* having gain'd (and still enjoying) all the Dominions of the *Eastern Casars*: Though the last Breath of the Church in the *East* seems not to have been till about *A. D.* 1522, when *Rhodes* was taken by *Soliman*. And this happening just about the Time of the remarkable *Æra* of the *Philadelphian State*, we can't but admire and adore the Wisdom and Goodness of Divine Providence in so disposing and conducting this great Event, that as the *Fall of the Jews* at first was the *Riches of the Gentiles*, so now the Ruin of the *Eastern Church* should prove the Rise of the *Western*.

The particular
Commendation.

Ver. 4. *Thou hast a few Names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their Garments, and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.*—There can't well be a stronger Intimation of the wretched Degeneracy of a Church, than to say, that *even such* a Church has a few sound Members; which is the same as to say, that some good Men are to be found even in the worst of Times. Who these few Names or Persons in the *Sardian Church*,

Church were, we learn from History, namely, the *Albigenses* and *Waldenses*, and others, the Opposers of the Papacy, against whom at last the *Crusades*, or Holy Wars, (as they call'd them) were levied, and of whom 'tis said that near a Million of them were slain. Yet these were but few in comparison, considering the long Duration of this Period of the Church, the infinite Multitude of those that were corrupted during this Period, or the vast Majority on the other side; even as few comparatively, as the *seven thousand Men in Israel*, that, during that grand Apostasy in the Reign of *Ahab*, had *not bowed their Knees unto Baal*. These were the true *Primitive Protestants*, that stood the first Brunt of Popish Rage and Persecution, that struggled with so many Difficulties, and sustain'd so many terrible Conflicts against Popery; to whom we are obliged for the first Dawnings of that glorious Reformation, which was the peculiar and distinguishing Blessing of the following Age.

Who the Predecessors and Successors of the *Albigenses* and *Waldenses* were, we have this brief Account from the Editor of *Perrin's History* of these People.—As in the Valleys of *Piedmont*, the Primitive Christianity was derived down to *Claudius* Archbishop of *Turin*, who maintain'd the Purity of Doctrine in the Ninth Century against the Innovations of *Rome*, and who derived down the same to his Disciples, and they to succeeding

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Generations to this Day: so in the Neighbouring Parts, in *France*, in the Eighth Century, the Purity of Christianity, in Opposition to the Idolatry of the Church of *Rome*, was strenuously maintain'd under *Charlemagne*; and from the Holy Men of that Age the Lamp of pure Doctrine was handed down to *Bertram*, from him to *Berengarius*, from him to *Peter Bruis*, from *Peter Bruis* to *Waldo*, from *Waldo* to *Dulcinus*, from him to *Marfilius*, from him to *Wickliff*, from him to *Hus* and *Jerom of Prague*, and from their Scholars, the *Fratres Bohemi*, to *Luther* and *Calvin*. These are some of the brave Christian Heroes in that dark corrupt Age, in that most degenerate State of Christianity, which is here denoted by the Church in *SARDIS*, of whom the World was not worthy, but whom our Saviour pronounces (according to the gracious Terms of the Gospel-Covenant) worthy of the Reward he design'd for them, and bears this Testimony to them, that they had *not defiled their Garments*, viz. with Popish Errors. The Purity of their Lives and Doctrines may be seen at large in the History before mentioned. The Reward promised them by *Christ* shall be consider'd under the next Particular.

The Promise. Ver. 4. *He that overcometh, the same shall be cloth'd in white Raiment, and I will not blot out his Name out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his Name before my Father, and before his Angels.*

gels.——As the Promise in this and every other Epistle is made to him only that *overcometh*, we are to consider that the Christian Warfare, like any other Warfare, is a Work of Time and Difficulty, and not to be finish'd all at once; in which too a Man may be foil'd and wounded, and yet recover and not be overcome: So long as he continues fighting, he is not conquer'd; he must quit the Field of Battle, be kill'd, or taken Prisoner, before he can be said to be routed or vanquish'd. But the Christian Warrior has this Advantage above any other, that even the Loss of Life shall not deprive him of the Crown of Victory; since a Man may be slain in this War, and yet come off more than Conqueror: For he is only required to be *faithful unto Death*, and then is sure to obtain a *Crown of Life*. Now considering the fatal Degeneracy and overspreading Corruption of the *Sardian* Age, we may reasonably conclude that there were but few so righteous then, as not to stand in need of Repentance; few that kept themselves so untainted from the general Contagion, as not to have occasion to wash their Garments; and therefore our Saviour, *ver. 3.* calls upon the whole Church, both Pastors and People, to repent, and promises to them that do repent the same Reward as he promises to those that had not defiled their Garments, that he *will not blot out their Name out of the Book of Life* on account of any deadly Sin they had committed,

mitted, but had now repented of, but would *confess their Name*, or own them for his true and faithful Disciples before his Father and before his Angels; a most encouraging Promise and suitable Reward for their witnessing a good Confession before the World. Nor is this all; but he promises moreover that they shall *walk with him in White*, and be *cloath'd in white Raiment*; which is an Allusion to an initiating Ceremony in Use among the *Jews*, when they admitted the Candidates for the Priesthood into that Office, after they had examin'd and judg'd of their Fitness as to their Genealogy and Unblemishedness of Body, by putting on them a white Robe, and then receiving them into the Court of the Priests: so that the Words of this Promise taken together, import the same as St. *John* afterwards observes, that they shall be *Kings and Priests unto God*, or have a Share in that *Royal Priesthood*, which is to be the glorious and distinguishing Privilege of the *New Jerusalem*: That Title which with too many is most Contemptible in this World, will be found most Honourable in the next. Their *Regal* Title is sufficiently implied in the first Promise, that they shall *walk with Christ*; and their *Priestly* State in the latter, that they shall be *cloath'd in white Raiment*; which eminent Favour and Honour (so expressive of their Character) our Saviour tells us they had (in a manner) merited and acquired. *They shall walk with me in White,*

for they are worthy. Whereby our Lord shews his Readiness to recognize the real Worth of his faithful Servants, the high Esteem he has of all those who withstand the Torrent of bad Times, and are not borne down with the Overflowings of Ungodliness, and his singular Love and Regard for such as signalize themselves in a Time of universal Corruption. We can give no other Reason why *Noah, Daniel, and Job*, are singled out from all the other Saints of the Old Testament as the greatest Favourites of Heaven, or as the only Men whose Prayers had the greatest Prevalence with God, but this, that they all lived in the most corrupt Times and Places, and preserv'd their Integrity in the midst of an abounding Iniquity. And such was the Case of the Faithful in the Church in *Sardis*, that lived like *Lot* in *Sodom*; yea, that were *burning and shining Lights* in the midst of *Ægyptian* Darkness, of such gross Ignorance and Corruption, as had overspread the Face of the Earth. Therefore *they shall walk with me in white*, says *Christ*, *for they are worthy.*

The Monitory Conclusion. Ver. 6. *He that hath an Ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.*—

i. e. Let the *present Churches* in the *Sardian* State carefully observe what is here promised to those who *hold fast their Integrity*, and *fight the good Fight of Faith*, that they may be encouraged and excited to the like Faithfulness

fulness and Perseverance; and likewise what is threaten'd against the Wicked and Negligent, that they may awake in time out of their Spiritual Slumber, and escape the Judgments that will at last overtake the corrupted and impenitent Christians. And let succeeding Churches and *future* Generations regard in their Mind the Work of the Lord, and the Operations of his Hands in these and the like Cases, lest they also perish from the right Way, and *fall after the same Example of Unbelief.*

C H A P. VII. *Ep.* VI.

*An Exposition of Christ's Epistle to the Church
in PHILADELPHIA.*

*The sixth
Church, what
the Name de-
notes.*

Ch. iii. Ver. 7. *AND to the
Angel of the
Church in Philadelphia write.*

—PHILADELPHIA (according to the true Reading of the Word in the Original) signifies *Brotherly Love*; which is the proper distinguishing Character of that Body of Christians which constitute the *Reformed Churches*, and more particularly of the sound Members of the *Church of England*, ever justly esteemed the Bulwark and Ornament of the Reformation. *England* lies in the most temperate Part of the

temperate Zone, and enjoys a Religion as temperate as the Climate itself; and as *Good-Nature* (the *true Characteristick* of her Natives) is noted to have such a peculiar Sense in the *English* Tongue, as cannot easily or fully be express'd in any other Language; so this happy Temper is, above all others, the most suitable to our common *Christianity*, which is not only the Best, but the Best-natur'd Institution in the World. By the Church in *Philadelphia* then I have sufficient Reason (as will be seen hereafter) to understand the Church of England, though not exclusive of the other Reformed Churches; and by the Church of England, I understand, not any particular Members of it, who may be tempted, on some Occasions, to act contrary to their avowed Principles and Profession, but those in general who adhere stedfastly to the Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship, that has all along been professed and practised in our Church. And the Charity and Moderation of the Church of England, taken in this Sense, has, I presume, been made known unto All. Or should she want the *Witness of Men*, she has here the *Witness of God*, which is greater; having as full a Right, by the Testimony of our Saviour, to the Title of *Philadelphia*, which denotes in particular the Love of our Brother or Neighbour, as the Primitive Church had to that of *Ephesus*, which denotes Love in general.

*The Commence-
ment of the Phi-
ladelphian State.*

The Remains of the *Grecian* Empire were scarce fal'n into the Hands of the *Ottomans*, before the *Reformation* began; which was one of the most illustrious Events that has happen'd since the Times of the Apostles: The Light of the Gospel, which had shone more or less from the Days of *Constantine* for twelve Centuries together in the *East*, being now, with the Addition of a brighter and purer Lustre, transferred to the *West*. This Reformation of Religion, or Revival of Primitive Christianity, was begun by *Luther* abroad, forwarded here, in one important Instance, by King *Henry VIII*, carried on with Vigour and Success in the pious, but short Reign of King *Edward VI*, and perfected and completed in the long and glorious Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*. *Luther* began to preach against the *Popish* Errors *A. D.* 1517, and within 50 Years after that, no less than Seven Kingdoms or States, and 24 Cities, had receiv'd his Doctrine. The *Swiss Cantons* receiv'd it *A. D.* 1531, *Sweden* and *Denmark* about the Year 1537: In the Reign of King *Edward VI*, who came to the Crown *A. D.* 1547, the Reformation was establish'd by Law in *England* and *Ireland*: *Scotland*, which was then, and long continued an independent and separate Kingdom, had it established *A. D.* 1567, and the *Netherlands* by *A. D.* 1579.

Christ's Title.

Ibid. These things saith he that is Holy, he that is True, he that hath the Key of David, he that openeth and no Man shutteth, and shutteth and no Man openeth.——Every Title of Christ has relation to the particular State of the Church it is directed to: And the Title he here gives himself, is most exactly suited to the Circumstances and Character of the Church in *Philadelphia*. 1. *He that is Holy, he that is True.* Holiness and Truth are the Sum of the *Divine Perfections*, and constitute that *Image of God* which was at first stamp'd upon the Soul of *Man*, and is since renew'd by the Preaching of the Gospel and Effusion of the Spirit. And the former is here put before the latter, to signify perhaps that Truth is a Consequence of Holiness, according to that of the Psalmist, *the Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and his Covenant to make them know it*: But Holiness is not always an Effect of Truth, since Men may, and too often do, *hold the Truth in Unrighteousness*. Now *he that is Holy, he that is True*, i. e. Holiness and Truth itself, delights to see and is ready to acknowledge this Image of his wheresoever he finds it; and by prefixing this Title to this Epistle does not obscurely intimate, that this was the blessed Condition of the *Philadelphian State*, when *Truth sprung out of the Earth, and Righteousness looked down from Heaven*, when the pure Light of the Gospel shone forth in the Lives of its
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Professors, and made this Church *a Praise upon Earth*. Therefore is she highly praised and greatly encouraged by her Saviour, and is the *only* Church beside that in *Smyrna*, that stands free from all Blame. 2. *He that hath the Key of David*, i. e. the Power of *David*, as Prophet, and as King; as Prophet, to unlock the Womb of Futurity, and declare things to come; as King, to appoint whomsoever he pleased to rule his People, and defend his Church; and who is both able and willing to bestow upon his Vicegerents in the *Philadelphian* State as much Dignity, Riches, and Honour, and as great a Measure of Peace and Plenty, or of Victory and Success, as ever was enjoy'd in the most flourishing Days of *David* and *Solomon*. 3. *He that openeth and no Man shutteth, and shutteth and no Man openeth*; i. e. who has the absolute Disposal of Times, Seasons, and Events, in relation to Persons, Families, and Kingdoms, and more especially in relation to his Church; fixing or removing his Candlestick whensoever and wheresoever he pleases. Where he *opens a Door*, or favours the Preaching of his Word, there all the Enemies of it shall never be able to overthrow it: And where he *shuts*, or has determined, by way of Punishment, the Extinction of a Church or People, or withdraws the Light of the Gospel from a Place, there Human Attempts are in vain to establish it.

The Commendation.

Ver. 8. *I know thy Works: Behold I have set before thee an open Door, and no Man can shut it. For thou hast a little Strength (or Host) and hast kept my Word, and hast not denied my Name.*—In order to understand aright the Matters contain'd in these Epistles, we must carefully distinguish the several Parts and Periods of Time within each respective State of the Christian Church; and not apply that to the *Whole*, which belongs only to a *Part*, or that to *one* particular Part which belongs to *another*. The Necessity of this Distinction will, in some measure, appear from the Explanation of this Verse; which primarily relates to the first Opening of the Reformation by *Luther*; 2. To its Advancement in the Reign of King *Edward VI*; and 3. To the Zeal and Constancy of the Protestant Martyrs in the Days of Queen *Mary*. The first is contain'd in these Words, *I know thy Works, Behold I have set before thee an open Door, and no Man can shut it*——*I know thy Works*, i. e. I know what thou art a doing, I know the Sincerity of thy Intentions, and the Zeal of thy Endeavours; nor am I only acquainted with, but fully approve of the Work thou hast undertaken. *Behold I have set before thee an open Door, and no Man can shut it.* This is no less true of the wonderful Success and Progress of the Reformation, than of the first Planting and Propagating of Christianity. 'Twas *Christ* that open'd
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the Door both to the one and to the other: And the Success was answerable in both Cases. *Luther* was the great Instrument in the Hands of Divine Providence to bring about the Reformation; and he no sooner appear'd in this more than Human Undertaking, wherein according to all outward Appearance he had been crush'd, but he was so favour'd of Heaven, that he met with the Assistance of Princes who encouraged him to proceed; and his Followers met with the same Favour. He pretended to no Authority for the Proof of what he propos'd but the Word of God, which had been for many Ages taken from the greatest Part of Christians. With this *single Weapon* he batter'd and pull'd down the *vast Power* of the Popes, which had been a raising for above a thousand Years by all the Arts of the most refined Politicks, Religious Crafts, and the Terrors of War; so that within a few Years the Idolatrous Practices of the Church of *Rome*, which had been universally settled, were extirpated and thrown out of many Countries, and the Reformed Religion establish'd in their Room. A most wonderful and astonishing Event, and to be ascrib'd only to him who *openeth and no Man shutteth, and shutteth and no Man openeth!*

Among the *Natural* or Second Causes that may be supposed to have contributed to the Success of this great Work, these three proved the most reasonable and effectual, *viz.*
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the Revival of Learning about this time, the Invention of the Art of Printing, and the Translation of the Bible into the Vulgar Languages: By means of which, the Books that were publish'd by *Luther* and his Followers were the more easily dispers'd, understood, and examined; And their marvellous and irresistible Effect appear'd in a very short time. For from the very first preaching of *Luther* and his Disciples, some States began to side therewith; and within about sixty Years the Reformed Religion was settled and confirm'd by the Supreme Authority within seven Sovereign States or Kingdoms, as the *Reigning* Religion, or the Religion establish'd by Law. Such a mighty and great Revolution as this had never happened since Men became Idolaters, and (if we understand the Prophecy in this Epistle as looking directly this way) it had as much of the Divine Influence as the first planting of Christianity, or its Establishment by Human Laws. And truly that so many Countries in so short a Space of Time should wholly embrace the true Worship of God, so universally as it is done in the Protestant Countries by the Reformation, and continue ever since firm and unshaken in the same, notwithstanding all the prodigious Efforts of their Enemies to the contrary; this, I say, is undoubtedly the *Lord's Doing*, and ought to be *marvellous in our Eyes*. 2. The Advancement and Settlement of the Reformed Religion in *England*, during

during the Reign of King *Edward VI*, seems evidently implied in the following Words—*For thou hast a little Strength*, or *Host*: For though this may be applied, in some sense, to the Reformation carried on abroad, yet is it not so strictly true of *all the Protestant Countries* taken Collectively, as of the *Church of England* Separately; which may most properly be said at that time to have a *little Strength*, or a little *Host*, even the first Reformers in King *Edward's* Reign, that like the little *Host* of *Gideon* did Wonders, and like them too with Lamps in their Hands (*viz.* the Lamps of *Scripture* and *Antiquity*) routed and confounded all the numerous Forces of the Enemy: Or, to use a more suitable Comparison, the *Church of England* in her Infancy was like the first Christian Church after our Lord's Ascension, rais'd from as small Beginnings, blessed with the like Success, and built upon the same Number of Foundation-Stones. For as That was planted and watered by the twelve Apostles, so was This begun and settled by the twelve Compilers of our Liturgy: For Bishop *Day*, though join'd to the Committee, is by no means to be reckon'd of that Number, since he not only refused to subscribe to it, but vehemently opposed it, and continued a bigotted Papist to the very last. Thus did this little *Host* settle the great Work of Reformation in these Realms upon a firm Basis, and compose a Liturgy or *Book of Common-Prayer* for

for present and future Ages, that will continue, we trust, till Time shall be no more, that is the Glory of the *English* Nation, and the Envy of Christendom.

3. The Zeal and Constancy of the first *English* Reformers is thus recognized and commended by *Christ*——*And hast kept my Word, and hast not denied my Name.* For that this is to be understood of the Martyrs and Confessors in the Days of *Queen Mary*, when the Religion that was establish'd in the former Reign, was now under Persecution, and the Liturgy seal'd and consecrated by the Blood of its Compilers, there is little or no Room to doubt. And these blessed Protestant Heroes (of whom *Christ* here witnesseth that they *kept his Word, and did not deny his Name*) appear by their Exemplary Courage and Conduct to be no ways inferior to the first Rank of Martyrs in the Primitive Church. But here there is no need of Enlargement; every one's Reading or Observation being abundantly sufficient to confirm the Truth of the Correspondency between the Prediction and the Event.

A peculiar Temporal Promise to this Church.

Ver. 9. *Behold, I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come, and worship before thy Feet, and to know that I have loved thee.*

——The Facts answering this Prophecy bring us within View of our own Times, and

and will be found to reach near as far as the Conclusion of the last Peace. And therefore a few general Hints will here be sufficient. The main Question is, upon what Body of Men we are to fix the heavy Charge of being of the *Synagogue of Satan*. But the Resolution of this is easy and obvious. For,

1. I may without Scruple and with the greatest Justice assert, That this Denomination properly belongs to all those *Roman-Catholics* in particular, who have been plotting against the Lives of our Princes, and attempting the Overthrow of our Constitution ever since the first Establishment of the blessed Reformation. For that cruel Doctrine which maintains the Lawfulness of extirpating Hereticks out of Zeal to Mother-Church, we may infallibly conclude is no other than the *Doctrine of Devils*, and could proceed from no other Spirit, but him who first taught Rebellion in Heaven, and has been a *Murderer from the Beginning*.
2. We may affirm, that this Imputation is with equal Justice chargeable on that hellish Combination of Fanatical and Republican Spirits, who bound themselves by a solemn League and Covenant to destroy Root and Branch, that is, to murder their King and his Family, and utterly abolish Monarchy and Episcopacy; for these were as far from being true Protestants, as they were from being true Subjects; having shewn themselves by their horrid and execrable Deeds to belong of Right

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to no other Society, than the *Synagogue of Satan*. They call'd themselves *Jews*, that is, the true People of God, but were found *Liars*. Now our Saviour's Promise to the true *Philadelphian Church*, that he would bring these false Christians and blood-thirsty Enemies under their Feet, and make them *know* that he loved them, was remarkably fulfill'd in four signal Instances, to mention no more at present. 1. In the Reign of our Immortal *Virgin Queen*, when the formidable, and to all human Appearance invincible *Spanish Armada* was sent against the *English Navy and Nation*: But he who giveth Victory and Salvation unto Kings, by Thunder and Tempest fought for us, and baffled the whole Power of *Spain*, and made them sensible with a vengeance, that God was on our Side: As the King *Spain* himself confess'd in those memorable Words, that *he sent his Fleet to fight against Men, and not against God*; thereby confirming in part the Truth of our Saviour's Promise and Prediction, that God was the Queen's and her People's Protector, and that their Enemies should *know* that he loved them. 2. In the Beginning of the next Reign we meet with the unparallel'd Gunpowder-Plot to destroy the Church at one Blow; as if the Papists had design'd to revenge themselves, not only upon the Nation, but even upon God himself, for the former Defeat and Disappointment. But this dark and daring Attempt was likewise
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in the critical Instant miraculously discover'd, and stifled in the Birth, that all the World again might see and *know* that God was our Saviour and mighty Deliverer. 3. The Restoration of the Regal Family, after the long fanatical Usurpation, was another Miraculous Demonstration, in the View of all the World; of God's transcendent Mercy, Love, and Graciousness towards this Church and Nation. 4. The many signal and repeated Victories and Successes vouchsafed to our Renowned *Widow* Queen against the united Force and aspiring Power of *France* and *Spain*; do plainly make up one Part of the Accomplishment of this Prophecy. Heaven brought down the *French* King upon his Knees. He bowed and worshipped before the Feet of our pious Sovereign. At the same time that the Victorious Arms of the Confederates had reduced him to great Extremity, his People were visited with a Famine. We saw then this haughty Monarch humbly supplicating for Peace, and disposed to grant us every thing that we could with Reason or Modesty demand. And never, during the whole Course of the War, was there a fairer Prospect, or more favourable Opportunity of procuring a glorious and lasting Peace, than at the Treaty of *Gertruydenburg*. But when instead of consulting our own Honour and Interest, we seem'd rather inclin'd to mock and insult, we rais'd our Enemy and sunk ourselves. That one ungenerous Article (so unbecoming the

English Nation) that was to oblige the *French* King to turn his own Arms to drive his Grandson out of *Spain*, seem'd to be resented by God as well as Man. For after this the Success of the *English* Arms visibly began to decline; yea, after this came the fatal Battle of *Almanza*, &c. And no wonder if Providence denied us at last what we might call an Honourable and Advantagious Peace, when we had ourselves, at the most seasonable and inviting Juncture, refused the Offer of a Peace, upon whatever Terms we pleas'd, within the Bounds of natural Justice and common Decency. But this only by the way. In general we know that the Reign of this Religious Queen was crown'd with Victory and Success; that she had the Hearts of her Subjects at home, and triumph'd over her Enemies abroad. Which was a Demonstration *ad Hominem* that she and her People were under the Favour and Protection of Heaven, and is mention'd here as such, *and they shall know that I have loved thee*; as if our Saviour had design'd to convince or to confound the Papists by their own Argument, since they make Success and Prosperity to be one of the Notes of the true Church.

Another peculiar Promise to the Suffering Members of this Church.

Ver. 10. *Because thou hast kept the Word of my Patience, I also will keep thee from the Hour of Temptation, which shall come upon all the World, to try them that dwell upon the Earth.*——Though
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this is spoken to the *Philadelphians* in general, yet does it more particularly respect the persecuted Protestants in the *Marian Days*, and the loyal Sufferers during the *Grand Rebellion*: Both which, in the strictest Sense and in the highest Manner, having kept the Word of *Christ's* Patience, that is, conform'd to the Precept and Example of *Christ* in suffering patiently, and even resisting unto Blood, became entitled to the following Promise, which is in general to take them away from the Evil to come; and is much the same with that made to good King *Josiah*, that he should be *gather'd into his Grave in Peace*, and that his *Eyes should not see all the Evil which God was about to bring upon Jerusalem*. For though these faithful *Philadelphians* endured great Sufferings, yet they are assured they shall escape much greater. *A Time* there is among the secret Stores of Providence, that, whenever it comes, will bring upon Mankind a Judgment as sudden and surprising, as that which overwhelm'd the Old World. *A Time* there is mention'd by the Psalmist when God *may be found*, and a Time of great Water-floods when there will be *no coming nigh him*: *A Time*, wherein *Noah*, *Daniel*, and *Job*, if they were living, would be able to deliver but their own Souls. This Time is here call'd the *Hour* of Temptation, which denoting a very small Space or Portion of Time, is most properly referred to the great *Antichristian Persecution*, which, as it will be most vio-

lent, so is to be very short: For so our Lord has promised, that *for the Elect's sake those Days shall be shortened*. Besides, there are other Expressions here, that plainly fix and determine it to this fatal Period. For 'tis call'd likewise the Hour of *Temptation*; which will consist not only of grievous Afflictions, Oppressions, and Calamities, but of what the Word more properly signifies, Temptation to Sin, Temptation to Infidelity, Temptation to Idolatry, and all manner of Wickedness. For then *Iniquity will abound*; then will appear, in the most literal Sense and barefaced Manner, *the Overflowings of Ungodliness*; then will there be found but little Faith upon Earth; then will the *Righteous scarcely be saved*; yea, then will there be a great Scarcity of good Men, because God, according to his Promise to the Church in *Philadelphia*, will take them to himself beforehand, and leave but few of the Righteous in comparison to undergo this fiery Trial: which, that it refers to the Persecution under *Antichrist*, is farther manifest from its being *Universal*: For 'tis said to *come upon all the World to try them that dwell on the Earth*. Not but that we may reasonably suppose that these Words do point likewise at some lesser Evils or Trials that will happen in the *Laodicean* State, as preparatory to those greater ones in the *Antichristian*. These may be more Personal and Particular, and reach and affect only or chiefly the inner Man; whereas the
other

other being the Consummation of the Curse, and the last and utmost Efforts of the Power and Policy of the Kingdom of Darkness, will be totally and universally felt, and extend to all Parts of the World, and to every Faculty of Man, in which he is capable of being tempted or tormented.

Happy therefore, thrice happy are those Righteous Souls, our pious Forefathers, the true *Philadelphians*, who are taken away from the Danger, and from the very Apprehension of these huge formidable Evils that are coming upon all the World to try them that dwell upon the Earth.

Ver. 11. *Behold, I come quickly.*——By these Words we are to understand *Christ's second Coming*, and that this second Coming of his will not be long after the *Philadelphian State*: And this farther confirms what I observed above, as to the Application of the preceding Passage. For the first great End of his second Advent is to destroy *Antichrist*, and to put an end to the *Antichristian State*. But he will come in *Judgment*, before he appears in *Person*.

Ibid. *Hold that fast which thou hast, that no Man take thy Crown.*——If we may suppose this to relate to any one particular Person more than others, our Thoughts must immediately be fix'd upon that great Luminary or Chief Angel in the Church in *Philadelphia*, the Blessed Martyr of *Forty-Eight*; who is here commended for his zealous and

noble Defence of the Christian Cause, and exhorted to persevere and hold fast his Integrity, that he lose not the *Crown of Martyrdom*, which no one with more Honour or greater Difficulty obtain'd. Let me only observe farther, that this Expression, *that no Man take thy Crown*, seems to imply both the Possibility of falling from Grace, and the Impossibility of defeating thereby the Decrees of Heaven; in other Words, that if One fall away, Another shall be chosen in his room to fill up the Number of God's Elect, or that the Freedom of Man's Will to Evil shall not vacate the eternal Purpose, or make the Calling of God of none Effect.

*The General
Promise.*

Ver. 12. *Him that overcometh, will I make a Pillar in the Temple of my God; and he shall go no more out. And I will write upon him the Name of my God, and the Name of the City of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of Heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my New Name.*—
Christ here represents himself, as he does in the Beginning of the *Revelation*, as acting in his *Mediatorial Capacity*, or glorified Humanity; and so will continue to act till all things shall be subdued unto him, and God shall be *All in All*; and therefore there is in this one Passage such frequent Mention of *my God*, according to what he declared to some of his Disciples after his Resurrection, (whom he was not ashamed even then to call his Brethren)
I ascend

I ascend unto my Father and to your Father, and to my God and your God. The Words contain two eminent Promises in general, the one to give *him that overcometh* the Enjoyment of an high Privilege, the other to secure to him that Enjoyment. The first is implied in these Words, *I will make him a Pillar in the Temple of my God, and he shall go no more out*; i. e. whereas many sound Members of the Church in *Philadelphia* have, for their Zeal and Constancy in my Service, been driven from Place to Place, and deprived by Death or Persecution of the Benefit and Privilege of Church-Communion in this Life; upon their Admission into the *Heavenly Jerusalem*, they shall continue *Pillars* or chief Governors there, as long as that blessed State shall last. 2. The other Promise I may call *Christ's Testimonial* or Title to the faithful *Philadelphian*; whereby he is fully assur'd of, and may lay claim to, the foregoing Promise: For the better understanding the Meaning of which, we may consider, that as good Christians go out of this World with a greater or lesser Degree of Hope, with a stronger or weaker Assurance of a blissful Immortality; so we have Grounds to think that there are likewise different Degrees of Hope and Assurance in the *Middle State*, or the State between Death and the Resurrection; in which the Faithful departed enjoy indeed, in general, a comfortable Assurance and joyful Expectation of their perfect Consummation and

Bliss both in Body and Soul. But the particular Nature, Measure, and Degree of Happiness allotted for each, is what we may well suppose them to be for the most part ignorant of; according to the Account our Saviour himself gives us in relation to his Method of proceeding in the Day of Judgment; when he will say to the Righteous, *Come ye blessed of my Father—for I was an hungred, and ye gave me Meat*; at which some of them are represented as making Answer with a pleasing Surprise, *Lord, when saw we thee an hungred and fed thee?* But now Christ seems to promise the true *Philadelphians*, that all this Ignorance, Doubtfulness, or Uncertainty shall be wholly, in a manner, removed from them; that he will give them a Ticket or sure Title to the glorious Privilege of entering the *New Jerusalem*, and consequently of being Partakers of the first Resurrection; which I take to be the true Meaning of the following Expressions.—*And I will write upon him the Name of my God*; i. e. He shall have upon his Face or in his Hand, or in his Keeping, some peculiar Mark to distinguish him for a true Son of God: so he shall know himself to be, and so he shall be call'd and esteem'd by others; and as such shall reign with Christ, or be Heir of his Kingdom.—*And I will write upon him—the Name of the City of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of Heaven from my God.* i. e. He shall have beforehand an Assurance

rance of being a Fellow-Citizen with the Saints, a sure Title to a Freedom in *the City of God*, to be a privileg'd Inhabitant in the *New Jerusalem*, which is to be erected by the immediate Power of God, and is particularly describ'd in the 21st Chapter of this Book; and may be understood in a literal Sense.—*And I will write upon him my New Name*; i. e. My Name shall be upon his Forehead, as 'tis expressly said in the last Chapter. *My New Name* must, I conceive, be the Title of *King*, perhaps that which he wears himself upon his Vesture and upon his Thigh, *King of Kings and Lord of Lords*. For this *Revelation* being made to St. *John* not till after his Ascension, that is, not till his Investiture in his Regal State, nothing *before* that could properly be call'd *New*. Now in the *Millennial State*, or *Christ's* Reign with his Saints a Thousand Years, some will be, as it were, his *Courtiers*, and others only his *Subjects*; so that this Promise of writing his New Name upon them, which is made only to this Church and to that in *Pergamus*, seems somewhat peculiar and distinguishing; and may probably imply, that as those two Churches most clearly explain'd, and most strenuously contended for the Doctrine of *Christ's Divinity*, so they shall, in their Reward, be distinguish'd accordingly. For *them that honour me, I will honour*.

Ver.

The Monitory Conclusion. Ver. 13. *He that hath an Ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.*

— i. e. Let him hear and consider the great Motives and Encouragements given by the Spirit in every Epistle to Faithfulness and Perseverance, the Admonitions to the present Members, and the Warnings of approaching Danger to those that succeed.

Before we come to the *Laodicean Age*, we will here make a Stand, and look back a little upon the Ground we have travelled, and the large Tract of Time we have survey'd: And upon the slightest Review, we can't but observe the wonderful Chain of Providences and Events, their mutual Connexion and Dependence, their regular successive Order, and their exact Correspondence and Conformity to the Prophetical Description, not only in the main Substance, or with respect to the general Character of each distinct Church or State of Christianity, but even in the minutest Circumstances, as the *Names* of the several Churches, the *Order* of Succession, the peculiar *Promise* given to each, and the different *Title* of *Christ* prefixed to every Epistle. Other Prophecies in Old or New Testament point at one certain determinate Period of Time for their respective Accomplishments; but this is one continued Chain of Prophecies, that includes a long Series of Events, and takes in a vast Compass of Time:
And,

And, considering the admirable Harmony of the Whole and of the several Parts, the perfect and punctual Agreement, in every respect, between the Predictions and the Events, the Copiousness of the Subject, or the Variety of Matter contain'd in these Epistles, which treat of the Affairs of all the Christian Churches from the *Apostolick Age* to the *Antichristian State*, and the Extent or Duration of the Time, including no less than sixteen Centuries successively; we can't but look upon *this Prophecy* as the most *illustrious*, the most *perspicuous*, and the most *comprehensive*, of any to be met with in the whole Book of God.

C H A P. VIII. *Ep. VII.*

*An Exposition of Christ's Epistle to the Church
in LAODICEA.*

*The Name of
the seventh or
last Church ex-
plain'd.*

Ch. iii. Ver. 14. *AND to the
Angel of
the Church in LAODICEA write,
——Laodicea implies, as to
Principle, that impious absurd
Doctrine, that all Government is derived not
from God, but from the People, and signi-
fies, as to Practice, the Ruling of the Peo-
ple, or a general Rising up against Autho-
rity; when the Vox Populi is become not on-
ly*

ly noisy and querulous, but dictating and imperious; when even *Christians* begin to unlearn the Duty of Subjection, and to throw off all Respect and Reverence for their Governors: A Character that suits no Age more than the present. The loud popular Clamour for *Liberty* in these Days, when Men are almost *surfeited* with it, is just like the Noise of *Drunkards*, who are then observ'd to be most greedy and quarrellsome after Drink, when they have least need of it, and have indeed no Reason in the World for drinking any more, but that they have drank too much already: Or like the Murmuring of the *Israelites* in the Wilderness, who, when they had *Manna* to the full, long'd for the *Flesh-pots of Ægypt*; and God in Judgment, not in Mercy, gave them their Heart's Desire; *he gave them Quails to eat*, and eat they did till the Meat *came out at their Nostrils*; and what they desired to please their Appetite, proved their Destruction: For *while the Meat was yet in their Mouths, ere it was chew'd, the Wrath of God came upon them, and slew the Wealthiest of them*. May This never be *our Case*! Though some People seem resolv'd never to leave off their Cries for *Liberty*, till they have obtain'd an absolute universal Indulgence, *that every one may do what is right in his own Eyes*, that is, till there be *no King in Israel*.

To confirm this Character of the present Age, I shall here produce the Testimony of
a learned

a learned Foreigner from his celebrated Oration before a judicious and august Assembly.

—*Dum quidam Servituti se tantum subducere velle profitentur, Confusionem & Licentiam ubique disseminant. Religionem vellent absque Ministris, Societatem sine Præpositis, Leges sine Obedientia, Regulas sine Praxi. Auctoritas omnis pro Tyrannide, Disciplina pro Servitute, Ceremoniæ & Usus pro totidem Superstitionibus æstimantur. Liberum se non putat hoc hominum genus, nisi omnem Superiorum & Legum Auctoritatem abjiciant.*—

The Author in these Words seems to point only at the Modern Set of *Freethinkers*; but alas! the Infection is spread much farther, and the Disease is become Epidemical. And if we add to this the other distinguishing Characteristick of the *Laodicean Age*, viz. that of *Lukewarmness*, or a stupid Indifferency and Unconcernedness in Matters of Religion, we shall find but few Places uninfected with one or other. *Gallionism* has been openly defended, and the *Deistical* and *Republican* Principles have long ago taken a deep Root in this Nation, and are now shooting forth their deadly Branches. The only Remains almost now-a-days of Primitive Zeal, and of Ancient Discipline and Government, are to be found in our two famous *Universities*. These Fountains still run pure and clear, tho' the Streams that issue from them are too often corrupted: And indeed we no sooner quit these renowned Seats of solid Learning, true
Reli-

Religion, and useful Discipline, but we come into an infected Air; and happy, thrice happy they, that after this escape the general Contagion, that maintain their Constancy, and hold fast their Integrity in the midst of so much *Licentiousness* and *Lukewarmness*.

The Commencement of the Laodicean State.

It may be too invidious a Task to presume to determine the exact Commencement of the *Laodicean Age*; though I can't forbear mentioning one *notable Æra*, from whence we may reasonably date the gradual Decline and Decay of Authority both in Church and State: I mean the Time when the most Venerable Assembly in the Christian World began to remit and slacken the Reins of Discipline in a Case that is too well known to need any Enlargement. For when Complaint was brought before them against a learned and subtle Reviver of *Arianism*, by their dilatory Proceedings on that Occasion, they gave the Party accused an Opportunity to secure an Interest,——and at length he was suffer'd to escape without any other Censure or Punishment than that of being prohibited to write any more on the Subject of the Trinity, and of signing a formal Recantation artfully framed and drawn up by himself; and so was permitted to enjoy his Benefice during Life. The Effects and Consequences of which criminal Indulgence and fatal Partiality, are sadly felt at this Day.

Ibid.

Christ's Title to this Church. Ibid. *These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the Creation of God.*—

This Title, as address'd to the *Laodiceans*, seems intended for a *Warning*, for *Example*, and for *Encouragement*. For this being the *last* State of Christianity that is to appear or make any Figure in the World (since 'tis to be succeeded by no other but the *Antichristian*) our Saviour, agreeably hereto, styles himself, in the first place, *the Amen*; that is, that as he is the First, so he is the Final Cause, the End and Consummation of all things, in whom the Myſtery of God both commenced and will be compleated, *in whom all the Promises of God are Yea and Amen*, who is the Founder both of the Old and New World, the Author of the ſpiritual as well as material Creation, *the Beginner and Finisher of the Faith*, τῆς πίστεως ἀρχηγὸς καὶ τελειωτὴς. By this Title then Chriſt tacitly admoniſhes the *Laodiceans*, that the *Time is ſhort*, and the *Day is at hand*; and therefore that if they will enter into Life, they muſt haſten their Preparations for it, awake out of Sleep, reſume their Courage, and rekindle their Zeal. To which End he propoſes himſelf as a Pattern to them, by calling himſelf, in the next place, *the faithful and true Witness*; intimating thereby, that he lived in as corrupt and degenerate Times as they can do, and yet, notwithstanding that, *witneſſed a good Con-*

Confession before Pontius Pilate, declaring in his Presence, when examined before him, that *for this End was he born, and for this Cause came he into the World, that he should bear witness to the Truth*. With him was not *Yea and Nay*, no *Trimming* or *Tergiversation*, no *Halting* between contrary Opinions or Practices, no *Lukewarmness* or *Indifference*, no *Fainting* or *Cowardice*; but what he preach'd in his Life, he confirm'd in his Death. This is *the faithful and true Witness*, whose Cause we are to plead, and whose Example we ought to follow; and that none may be discouraged from following it in these Days, he styles himself in the last place, *the Beginning of the Creation of God*; that is, that as he form'd Man at first out of the Dust of the Earth, and breath'd into him the Breath of Life, and will raise him again from the Dust to a New and Better Life; so he can even now quicken those that are dead in Trespasses and Sins, renew them again to Repentance, and raise up to himself a peculiar Generation of sound and sincere Believers, to be his Witnesses in the latter Days, to oppose the dreadful Progress of *Antichristianism*, and to *fight the Lord's Battles*. And this he seems ready, and even promises to effect, as will be seen hereafter. I only note here, that These (whenever call'd) are undoubtedly the Persons pointed at and represented by the *Labourers* in the Parable, that were hired about the *Eleventh Hour*; who, though

though not call'd till the last Age of the World, and perhaps not till the latter Stage of their Life, shall (if they prove faithful and endure unto the End) be equally rewarded with those that have *borne the Burden and Heat of the Day*.

Ver. 15, 16. *I know thy Works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot: So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my Mouth.*—Christ's Complaint or Character of the *Laodiceans* is, that they are *neither cold nor hot*, but made up of a strange odd Mixture partaking of both, which we call *lukewarm*; by which is meant a middle State between Profaneness and Piety, when Men have Religion enough to keep them *easy*, but not enough to make them *safe*; when they can't be content without *some* Religion, but can be content with a very *little*: when their Affections are divided between God and the World, and they bestow their cooler Affections upon God's Service, but reserve the warmer for worldly Pursuits. But *I would*, says Christ, *that thou wert either cold or hot*, that is, that thou would'st either lay aside all Pretences to Religion, or that thou would'st be Religious in good earnest; that thou would'st shew no Reverence to me at all, or that thou would'st express thy Reverence by a zealous Performance of my Commandments. For God will be *sanctified*

in them that come near him, and declares that he will not be mock'd, and can more easily endure that his Grace should not be known, than that it should be despised. But because thou art lukewarm, or hypocritical, pretending to inward Holiness, when thou hast only the Shell or Shadow of it, and art neither hot nor cold, not willing to throw off the Form, nor yet to rise up to the Power of Godliness, I will spue thee out of my Mouth: which is an elegant Allusion to the Nature and Quality of the Stomach, and those Meats and Drinks that are receiv'd into it. What is either *hot*, or *cold*, is immediately felt, and provokes the Stomach to receive with Greediness, and to retain; but that which is *lukewarm*, being very near of the same Degree of Heat with the natural Heat of the Stomach, is neither felt nor perceiv'd, but remains there for some time unconcocted and without working, and at last growing troublesome and disagreeable, is cast out with loathing, like an unwelcome and unprofitable Guest. The *main* Drift then of this Similitude (for we are not to wrest Similitudes beyond their *due Scope*) seems to be this; that if it relates to the Church *in general* that is grown thus *lukewarm* and unprofitable, then *Christ* here threatens that he will cast it out of his Sight, or remove it into another Land, or give Orders concerning it, as the Husbandman in the Parable did concerning the barren Fig-tree, after he had tried all Methods of

of Cultivation, and found that it produced nothing but Leaves, *Cut it down, why cumbereth it the Ground?* Or if it respects only the particular Members of the Church, that have long continued in a State of Barrenness, *Lukewarmness*, and Indifference, and brought no Fruit to Perfection; then this Threatning of our Saviour's plainly imports, that as Vomiting is generally sudden and violent, so he will hastily or unexpectedly *spue these out of his Mouth*, or cut them off by some sudden or violent Death, or some sad Disaster; God being often observ'd to bear longer with notoriously negligent Men, than with those that are hypocritical, unsound, or unsincere. And 'tis melancholy to observe how many sad Instances there have been in this Nation of such sudden Excisions within these few Years: And every Day presents us with fresh Instances enough to excite our Vigilance, to quicken our expiring Zeal, and make us shake off that Drowsiness and Supineness, which has so long possess'd and benumb'd our Souls.

The imaginary and real State of the Laodiceans. Ver. 17. *Because thou say'st, I am rich, and increased with Goods, and have need of nothing: And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable; and poor, and blind, and naked.* — In order to form

a right Notion of the *Laodicean State*, as here represented, it will be proper to look back, and take a short View of the State of Religion, as it stood in the latter End or towards

the Declension of the *Philadelphian Age*; which I shall give the Reader in the Words of a great Genius of our own Nation, that lived and wrote about that Time.—“ The
 “ State of *Religion* and the State of *Learn-*
 “ *ing* seem to stand at present like the two
 “ Poles of the Earth, one *Elevated* and the
 “ other *Depressed*.” The Truth is (though
 it be a sad one) *Finesse* and *Irreligion* make
 the Character of this Age, which has no
 Heat with its Light, but while it shines
 bright and radiant, feels cold and frozen,
 and with all the gay Appearances of Life,
 has the Chillness of Death upon it. *Thou*
hast a Name that thou livest, and art Dead,
Rev. iii. 1. Which plainly shews that the
 latter Days are come upon us, whereof there
 is this double Character, that *Knowledge* shall
increase, but the *Love* of many shall *wax*
cold.——It must be allowed, that the pre-
 sent Age has Advantages of *Preaching* and
Writing, far beyond what former Ages could
 boast of; and that Christians now have As-
 sistances almost as much beyond those of the
 Primitive Christians, as theirs were beyond
 those of the *Heathen World*; and yet (which
 is both strange and lamentable to consider)
 they excelled us as much in Goodness, as we
 do them in Learning and Knowledge, and
 were much better without these Advantages,
 than we are with them. No Learning like
 Modern Learning, no Reasoning like Mo-
 dern Reasoning, and yet no Christianity like
 Primi-

Primitive Christianity. Now indeed Christianity is better understood, and better defended, and the Rules of it more rationally enforced, but then 'twas better practised: Now we Discourse better, but we Live worse. What *shall* we, what *can* we say to these things? It is our great *Shame*, and it will be our *Condemnation*."——

*Christ's Counsel
or Exhortation
to the Laodiceans.* Ver. 18. *I counsel thee to buy
of me Gold tried in the Fire,
that thou may'st be rich; and
white Raiment, that thou may'st
be cloathed, and that the Shame of thy Naked-
ness do not appear; and anoint thine Eyes with
Eye-Salve, that thou may'st see.*——

As evil Habits are only to be overcome by contrary Habits, so this Counsel of our Saviour is here offered by way of Remedy, and suited to the threefold Malady of the *Laodiceans*, viz. their spiritual Poverty, Nakedness, and Blindness. 1. Their *Poverty* and Wretchedness is contracted by a Habit of Idleness, or by a Neglect of good Works: This Neglect is owing to want of Courage and Resolution, to Self-Indulgence or a vicious Tenderneſs to the Flesh, and to a Fear of Suffering or Dread of Persecution: The natural Effects of which are base Compliances with the Iniquity of the Times, a cowardly Silence, and scandalous Indifference in Matters of Religion, and the Cause of Truth: Now our Saviour here advises us to act the Reverse of all this, viz. not to be ashamed

to confess him before Men, not to be afraid of them which can only kill the Body, to be willing to endure Hardness as good Soldiers of *Jesus Christ*, to contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints, to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and to assert and vindicate the great Truths of the Gospel against all Opposition whatsoever, and even at the Hazard of all that is dear and valuable to Us in this World. This is to buy of him *Gold tried in the Fire*, whereby we may be *rich*, and without which (as the Times now are) we must be miserably *poor*. 2. The *Nakedness* of the *Laodiceans* respects more particularly that grand Division of Sin, *the Lusts of the Flesh*, which will more than ordinarily abound in the latter Days. For though *all Sin* is fitly represented in Scripture by the Word *Nakedness*, as it robs the Soul of its Ornaments, Cloathing, and Defence; yet is this more peculiarly and more emphatically true of the Sins of *Intemperance* and *Impurity*, which not only divest the Soul of its proper Covering, but expose it to open Shame and Contempt. Our Saviour therefore, on the contrary, counsels the *Laodiceans* to buy of him *white Raiment* that they may be cloath'd. *The white Raiment* is the *Righteousness of the Saints*, viz. Innocence and Purity, Repentance and Pardon. To buy these imports that we must be at some Pains and Expence to procure them; and the Reason given, *that the Shame of thy Naked-*

Nakedness do not appear, implies, that the Contagion is general, and that few are so righteous, upright, and secure in this respect, as not to stand in need of Repentance and Vigilance; and therefore that those who have not been so happy as to keep themselves altogether pure and unspotted from the World, should take care in time to wash away their Spots in the Waters of Contrition, and by a stricter and holier Conversation: That so whatsoever Defilements they may have contracted in the midst of a miserable and naughty World, through the Lusts of the Flesh or the Wiles of Satan, being purged and done away, they may at last be presented pure and without Spot before God.

3. The *Blindness* of the *Laodiceans* is to be removed by *anointing their Eyes with Eye-Salve*. By this, I conceive, is meant the Holy Scripture or Word of God, which the Psalmist calls *a Lamp unto his Feet, and a Light unto his Paths*; and is here very significantly said to be an *Eye-Salve*, as designed by God to cure and remove the Dimness of our Natural Reason, or of the Light of Nature; which he likewise foresaw would, in this degenerate and dark Age, be advanced by the Blind and Ignorant even above the clear Light of Revelation; which is most shamefully perverted, and most scandalously slighted and neglected in these Days, though the only thing that can make Men *wise unto Salvation*. The *Anointing* the Eyes with this

Eye-Salve signifies a constant, diligent, and conscientious searching and studying the Scriptures, to the Purposes of an holy Faith and suitable Practice, which is ever attended with the Illumination of the Spirit, and able to make every Christian perfect, to abound in all Wisdom and spiritual Understanding, and thoroughly furnished unto all good Works. And without this, the Knowledge of all other things will signify nothing. How great then must be the Guilt and Folly of those that despise or neglect these lively Oracles deliver'd to us? But whether Men will hear them, or whether they will forbear, the Words which *Christ* hath spoken unto them in his Gospel, the same shall judge them at the last Day.

But this Reproof and seasonable Advice is somewhat soften'd by assigning the Reason of its being given in the next Verse.

Ver. 19. *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.*——Though *Christ's* Chastisements as well as Rebukes are Tokens and Arguments of his tender Care and Affection; yet he seldom proceeds to the former, before he has tried the Success of the latter. He therefore *first rebukes* those whom he loves, that is, (to interpret this Passage with an Eye to the present State of Things, as 'tis but reasonable) he endeavours to make them sensible of their Laziness, their Indifference, and Lukewarmness, and that their Works, when weigh'd in the Balance, will be found wanting.

ing. This he reproveth them for, by the secret Whispers of his Spirit, by the Convictions of Conscience, by the Reasoning of their own Minds, by the Voice of his Messengers, by the various Occurrences that pass in the World, by the *Signs of the Times*, which are now so plain and visible that he who runs may read them, by the remarkable Evidences of the near Approach of his Second Coming, and by his exemplary Judgments upon others, whereby he gives Warning to those that escape: And if these and the like Methods prove insufficient to rouse them from their deadly Sleep, he then proceeds to his *strange Work*, to bring upon them Trouble, Affliction, and Persecution; and by a Course of severe Discipline opens their Ears to Instruction, and imparts unto them the Spirit of Wisdom, and thereby trains them up and prepares them by Degrees to be the Friends and Favourites of God. *At first this Holy Spirit will walk with them by crooked Ways, and bring Fear and Dread upon them, and torment them with her Discipline, until she may trust their Souls and try them by her Laws; then will she return the strait Way to them, and shew them her Secrets.* And I can't but think that this Passage bears a special Reference to that Prophecy in *Malachi*, which describes our Saviour's Method of proceeding with one particular Sort of Men in the latter Days.—*He is like Refiner's Fire, and like Fuller's Soap. And he shall*

shall sit as a Refiner and Purifier of Silver: And he shall purify the Sons of Levi, and purge them as Gold and Silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an Offering in Righteousness. And this is agreeable to what St. Peter observes, that *Judgment must begin at the House of God.* And the Time seems to be now come for it.

Ibid. Be zealous therefore and repent.—— Your Zeal is necessary both to testify the Sincerity of your Repentance, and to enable you to bring forth Fruits worthy of it: And you ought likewise to repent of your *Luke-warmness* hitherto, or of your former want of Zeal; which has been attended with fatal Consequences. The great Enemy of Mankind, and particularly of this Church and Nation, who has his Time and Season for every wicked Purpose, after he had for many Years together toss'd and divided us by Faction and Parties, drove us at last upon the opposite Extreme; and a general Stagnation of Zeal and Activity in the Cause of God and Religion has been but too visible for some time.

A special Promise and Encouragement to the attentive Laodiceans.

Ver. 20. *Behold, I stand at the Door and knock; if any Man hear my Voice and open the Door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

It is here to be noted, that in the Epistles to the other Churches, there is mention only of

of Rebuke and Commendation, and sometimes of both, and some Exhortation likewise is given to the Churches in *Thyatira* and *Sardis*: But to the Church in *Laodicea* the Exhortation, as before, is very express and particular, and here likewise are the greatest Motives to Repentance and Reformation; so that though this Church be not commended for any one Particular, yet there is Room left for the highest Commendation, and for the greatest Reward, if the Invitation and Counsel our Saviour gives be duly followed. Now he *stands at the Door and knocks*. Now he calls for our *Zeal*, and requires our *Repentance*. Now he invites All to come unto him, and promises to accept them upon the Terms of true Contrition and Amendement, and will reject none but those that think they are without Offence. Now he is ready to receive and entertain All that *open the Door* to him, and *hear his Voice*. It was an ancient Custom to knock and to call aloud at the same time. In allusion to this Custom our Saviour here declares of himself that he both asks and knocks for Admission into the Heart of every Christian; and the Promise he gives to those that will accept of the Invitation, *viz.* that he will *come in to them, and will sup with them, and they with him*, plainly implies and presignifies the more frequent Celebration of the *Lord's Supper*, whereby these new Converts or Penitents shall obtain a more abundant Consolation, or that

Grace

Grace shall chiefly be imparted to them by this means; which may likewise intimate the great Difuse or Discontinuance of the Holy Eucharist in these Days. This Promise then respects their speedy Growth in Grace, and quicker Advancement in Holiness, as the following does their Title (upon their Perseverance) to a far more exceeding Weight of Glory.

*The general
Promise.*

Ver. 21. *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my Throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his Throne.*——To overcome as Christ also overcame, may be an Intimation that the Laodicean State will be almost as corrupt, as that wherein our Saviour lived and exercised his Ministry; and that whoever will be good in this State, must expect to meet with something of the like general Opposition, Hatred, and Persecution; that the Difficulties however of this Warfare (if attended with Victory) will entitle a Man to the highest Reward, of which there is no Parallel upon Earth, even to sit upon the same Throne of Glory with our Saviour; which was never known to be the Case of any Subject with his Prince. This Promise is somewhat like that which Christ made to his Apostles——*Ye are they which have continued with me in my Temptations. And I appoint unto you a Kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my Table in my Kingdom,*

Kingdom, and sit on Thrones judging the twelve Tribes of Israel.——From which Words 'tis easy to observe, among other things, that those who endure the greatest Temptations shall have the greatest Rewards, or that those who have preserv'd their Integrity in the most trying Times shall be proportionably advanced in the Heavenly Kingdom: So that the Reward promised to the faithful or penitent *Laodiceans* seems to be the greatest of all.

The Monitory Conclusion. Ver. 22. *He that hath an Ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.*——

Let him hear what he says to his own Conscience, what he is now proclaiming to the World, what he speaks by his Prophets, what he has revealed of former Times, and what he declares of the present. Let him consider particularly, and mark well the fatal Progress of *Apostasy*, which began with the First Church, and will be finished in the Last. Let him recollect and remember that a *Defect* or Abatement of the *first Love*, under a Cessation of Persecution in the latter End of the *Ephesine* Church, opened the way to an Indulgence and *Toleration of Idolatrous Practices*, during the Sunshine of the *Pergamean* State; that this was succeeded by an *Establishment of Error and Heresy* in the *Thyatirian* Age; and that this produced an *almost total Apostasy* in the *Sardian* State. And had not God miraculously interposed, and put a stop to the fatal Progress by the Church in
Phila-

Philadelphia, and open'd then a Door to the Revival of *Primitive Christianity*, the World, long ere now, had filled up the Measure of its Iniquity, and must by this time have come to an End. But That which was stopt for the two last Ages, is broken out with greater Violence in this; and as there is nothing left to stop its farther Progress (this being the Last of the Seven Churches) it must settle upon its Lees, and have its final and fatal Period in the Mire and Dregs of *Antichristianism*. For when Religion sinks so low, or rises no higher, than to a State of Indifference and *Lukewarmness*, it either assumes the Mask of *Hypocrisy*, or ends in open Libertinism and *Profaneness*. And when the World, the *Christian World*, is arrived to this Height, or rather *Depth of Apostasy*, then will that *Man of Sin* appear, the Sum total or Recapitulation of all Iniquity, the Personal *Antichrist*, whose Coming will be after the Working of Satan, with all Power, and Signs, and lying Wonders, and with all Deceivableness of Unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the Love of Truth that they might be saved. For which most dreadful and most dangerous Trial, do Thou, O Blessed *Jesu*, who hast mercifully foretold and forewarned us of these perilous Days, fit and prepare all thy faithful Servants: Even so, Lord *Jesu*, Amen, Amen!

S. D. G.

St. P A U L's
P A N O P L Y,

O R

Compleat Armour of God:

Consider'd in a New Light, or with a View to the

Seven Churches in *Asia*.



THE
PREFACE.

THE following Expositions are designed to give some farther Light and Confirmation to the foregoing: And as Both together may be a Means to awaken some out of their Slumber, who have been too regardless hitherto of the Signs of the Times; so 'tis proper to caution others against interpreting those Signs in too rigid a Sense, as if the Kingdom of the Messiah would immediately appear. When St. Paul, to excite the Theſſalonians to greater Vigilance and Sobriety, had reminded them that the Coming of the Day of the Lord would be sudden and unexpected, he found it necessary in his second Epistle to them, to qualify the Assertion with some Restrictions, and to assure them, in a solemn manner, that the Day of the Lord (as That signifies the final

VOL. I. L Judgment)

Judgment) *would not come, except there came a falling away first; which, whenever it happens, ought to be a Sign and Warning to us of Christ's near Approach, but not of his immediate Appearance; since, according to the Prophecies of Old and New Testament, many wonderful and astonishing Scenes of Providence will be laid open, before the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord come. The principal of which are these that follow.*

1. *The Antichristian State.*
2. *The Fall of Babylon or Rome.*
3. *The Overthrow of the Ottoman Empire.*
4. *The Conversion of the Jews.*
5. *The Reign of Antichrist.*
6. *The Preaching, Death, and Resurrection of the two Witnesses.*
7. *The Destruction of the Antichristian Powers.*
8. *The Coming in of the Fulness of the Gentiles.*
9. *The New Jerusalem.*
10. *The First Resurrection.*
11. *The Millennium.*
12. *The Binding and Loosing of Satan.*
13. *The Burning of the World.*
14. *The general Resurrection.*
15. *The Day of Judgment.*

All these are great and awful Events, and such as (including many intervening Warnings and Judgments) may require a considerable Space of Time for their distinct and gradual Accomplishment. But though we stand at some Distance from the End, we may be nearer to the Beginning of this long Series of Wonders, than we imagine. The Coming of Antichrist in particular is what we have too just Reason to be apprehensive of. One certain Sign of his near Approach, according to St. Paul, is, when That which with-holdeth is taken away. But that This cannot signify the Fourth Kingdom or Roman Empire, is plain from hence; that the Taking away That which with-holdeth is given us as a sure distinguishing Mark of the near Revelation of Antichrist; whereas the Fourth Kingdom is to be taken away or subdued by Antichrist himself, and therefore That can't properly be call'd the Signal or Fore-runner of his Coming, which is an Evidence and Demonstration of his being actually come, yea, of his being arrived to great Power. I only observe farther, that the Apostle, in speaking a little after of the same Sign, varies the Expression from Thing to Person, from THAT which with-holdeth, to HE that with-holdeth; as if he design'd thereby

to intimate that what he means is of a complex Nature, neither a single Person, nor Abstract from Person: But what Either or Both these Expressions do properly and precisely denote, is more than we may be able, before the Event appears, with any Certainty, to determine.



St. PAUL's

St. P A U L's
P A N O P L Y.

EPH. VI. 11----19.

FInally, my Brethren, be strong in the Lord,
and in the Power of his Might. Put
on the whole Armour of God, that ye may be
able to stand against the Wiles of the Devil.
For we wrestle not against Flesh and Blood,
but against Principalities and Powers, against
the Rulers of the Darkness of this World,
against spiritual Wickedness in high Places.
Wherefore take unto you the whole Armour of
God, that ye may be able to withstand in the
evil Day, and having done all to stand. Stand
therefore, having your Loins girt about with
Truth, and having on the Breast-plate of Right-
eousness; and your Feet shod with the Prepa-
ration of the Gospel of Peace. Above all, ta-
king the Shield of Faith, wherewith ye shall
be able to quench all the fiery Darts of the
L 3 Wicked.

Wicked. And take the Helmet of Salvation, and the Sword of the Spirit; which is the Word of God: Praying always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all Perseverance, and Supplication for all Saints.

This Passage may be interpreted three different ways. 1. In the more direct and common way, as respecting all Christians indifferently. 2. In a more peculiar and remote Sense, as looking forward to the Day of *Antichrist*, that emphatically evil Day; when no less than the whole *Armour of God* will be more than ordinarily necessary to enable Christians to gain the Victory, or to stand their Ground. 3. In a large and comprehensive Sense, as including and characterizing, in due Order, the several States of the Christian Church.

As the former Part of the Words may be found to relate chiefly, or in a more eminent manner, to the *Antichristian* State, I shall here pass them by, designing at present to consider the Words only in the last of these Senses: In order to which, it is to be observ'd, that St. Paul was favour'd with more abundant Visions and Revelations, than any other Writer of the New Testament, except St. John; and that in some things relating to *Antichrist*, he is more express and particular than even St. John himself: which makes it reasonable to suppose, that some Parts of his

his Epistles have a *Mystical* and *Prophetical* Meaning, *beside* and beyond the *Literal*. That the Passage now to be examined is of this Kind, may in some measure appear from the following brief Explication; in which I shall offer nothing forced or strained, but only some plain and general Observations; and then leave the Reader to judge (by comparing this with the foregoing and following Expositions) whether such strong Lines of Resemblance, in *Number*, *Order*, and *Character*, running through our Saviour's *Epistles*, his *Beatitudes*, his *Prayer*, and this remarkable Passage of *St. Paul*, can be suppos'd to have been drawn without some wise Contrivance and particular Design. Though the Characters are not all exactly the same, yet each Character exactly suits the State of the Church to which it is appropriate; and All mutually serve to confirm and explain each other. The *Panoply* here is *sevenfold*, answering the sevenfold State of *Christ's Church*. And the several Pieces of this *Panoply*, or *whole Armour of God*, are placed by the Apostle in the following Order: 1. *The Girdle of Truth*; 2. *The Breast-plate of Righteousness*; 3. *The Sandals of Peace*; 4. *The Shield of Faith*; 5. *The Helmet of Salvation*; 6. *The Sword of the Spirit*. These are all the Pieces of Armour that are expressly mention'd in the Apostle's Account; but this is not All that is necessary for a *Soldier*; nor would All these signify any thing to him,

without *Vigour* and *Courage*, *Skill* and *Activity* in the Use of them; which, in the *spiritual* way, can be obtain'd only by *Prayer*; and therefore the Apostle subjoins this great Duty in the last place, and presses it with more Earnestness than all the rest. We may farther observe, that in this Divine Armoury there is but one *Offensive* Weapon, viz. the *Sword of the Spirit*. All the other Pieces are *Defensive*, and fitted to the several Parts of the Body; And as the *Church* is the *Mystical Body of Christ*, so the *different States* of the Church, or *Periods* of Christianity, are those Parts of the Mystical Body, in the *large Sense*, to which the several Pieces of the Christian Armour do more properly and more eminently belong. For though the whole *Armour of God* is necessary for every true *Christian*, and every *Christian Church*, yet it will be found, upon Enquiry, that some Pieces of this Armour are more proper and necessary, and have likewise actually been more made use of in some Times, than in others; as may now appear from a View of Particulars.

1. *Stand therefore, having your Loins girt about with Truth.* At the Time of our Saviour's First Coming, Mankind lay involv'd in a thick Mist of Ignorance and Error. The gross Corruptions which had crept into the *Jewish Church*, and the monstrous Lies of *Pagan Idolatry* and Superstition, had brought a Darkness over the Face of the whole Earth,
Such

Such was the State of the *Moral* World, and such a gloomy *Chaos* overspread the Minds of Men, when God was pleas'd to command, as at first, *Let there be Light, and there was Light*. The *Sun of Righteousness* appear'd, and dispell'd the Clouds of Ignorance and Superstition: The Truths he came to reveal were as so many Lights shining in the midst of Darkness. Most fitly therefore is *Truth* mention'd as the *first* Part of the Christian Armour. And as the *Loins* are the *weakest* and feeblest Part of the Body, and stand in need of a Band or *Girdle* to strengthen and succour them; so *Truth* is as necessary and effectual, both to stay and support the *Weaknesses* and *Imbecillities* of *Human Nature*, and to defeat the Force of the strongest Enemy. And here it may likewise farther intimate, that God was pleas'd to make choice of some of the *meanest* and *weakest* Instruments for propagating his Truth: But their *Simplicity*, *Faithfulness*, and *Sincerity* (which are also implied in the having their *Loins girt about with Truth*) together with their Power of working Miracles, were more than sufficient to recommend their Doctrine to the World, and to supply the Defects of Human Learning and Eloquence, and other secular Advantages. Nor was this the Case only of the First *Planters* and *Propagators* of Christianity, but of the *Generality* of the Primitive Christians, when *the Poor* more especially had the Gospel preach'd unto them, and not
many

many Mighty, not many Noble were called. These were the LOINS in the *Mystical Body of Christ*, but girt about with Truth, and able by *sound Doctrine* to defend themselves and their Cause, and both to exhort and to convince the Gainsayers. Now the State of the Church denoted by this *first Piece* of the *Christian Panoply*, we may suppose to have reach'd to the *Tenth General Persecution*. For as a Girdle about the Loins is design'd to strengthen and prepare Men for Action; so these First Soldiers in the Christian Warfare, being girded with the *Girdle of Truth*, were continually propagating the Faith of *Christ*, and spreading the Light of the Gospel, and by their Lives and Doctrines gaining new Converts every Day. So that this State of the Church was a State of *Labour* and *Activity*: But when the Tenth Persecution commenced, a stop was put, in a great measure, to the farther Propagation of Christianity by *publick Preaching* and Exhortation. The Christians of that fatal Period had enough to do to prepare themselves for the Crown of Martyrdom. And therefore it was necessary for *them in particular* to make use of another Piece of the Armour of God, namely,

2. *The Breast-plate of Righteousness*; by which is meant the Consciousness of their own Integrity, together with a well-grounded Assurance of being Justified or Accepted as Righteous before God, through the Merits and

and Satisfaction of *Christ*. And this was highly necessary and proper for them at that time, to secure them against the Terrors and Discouragements of the World, to support them under the Violence of Persecution and the Cruelty of their Persecutors, and the many black Accusations and foul Calumnies of licentious Tongues, that were then let loose upon them; against All which, they could then only retire into their own *Breasts*, and make their Appeal to the *Searcher of Hearts*. For as a *Breast-plate* is of principal Use to defend and secure the *Heart*, that Seat of *Natural Life*; so the Righteousness of these faithful Soldiers of *Christ*, filled them with all Joy and Peace in Believing, in the midst of their Sufferings, and secur'd their Title to *Life Eternal*. And happy then were those Christians, that, by a sound Faith and Repentance, and by an upright and holy Conversation, were prepared to undergo this fiery Trial, to withstand in that evil Day, and having done all to stand. While their Heart did not reproach them, they had nothing to fear; and though they were punished in the Sight of Men, yet was their Hope full of Immortality; for God proved them, and found them worthy for himself; and in these Primitive Patterns of Piety and Patience hath shew'd us the BREAST, the Heart, and the Vitals of true Religion. Those that surviv'd this Persecution enter'd upon a new Scene of Things, and the Third remarkable State or Period of the

156 St. PAUL's PANOPLY, or
the Christian Church, which is intimated and
represented in the next Particular, viz.

3. *And your Feet shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace.* After the Establishment of Christianity by Human Laws, the Persecution of Christians by the *Heathen* Powers was at an end: And the outward Peace and Prosperity they then enjoy'd would have been in great Danger of being abused, if they had not brought with them those Tempers and Dispositions of Soul, that Severity of Life and Strictness of Manners, that Patience, Gentleness, and Humility, which they had learnt in the School of *Christ*, and during the Times of Persecution. These were the *Preparation of the Gospel of Peace*, with which their *Feet* were to be *shod*, i. e. with which they were to adorn their daily Conversation; that so being perfect Masters of themselves, they might be the better qualified both to undertake the Government of others, and to endure the Contradictions of Gainlayers, or be able to refute the numerous and pestilent Heresies of those Times; and to bear with Meekness the Insults, Reproaches, and Persecutions, which their zealous and vigorous Defence of the Christian Faith would then expose them to. And it was but reasonable indeed to expect, that these faithful Servants of *Christ*, that had so lately come out of the Furnace of Adversity, that had *endured a great Fight of Afflictions*, and been disciplin'd and train'd up in
a long

a long Course of Hardships and Sufferings, would thus quietly and inoffensively behave themselves, as becometh the Gospel of Peace, *shewing all Gentleness towards all Men, in Meekness instructing those that oppos'd themselves.* And this we may observe was the general Temper of the faithful Christians of that Age; I mean, during the greatest Part of the *fourth* and the Beginning of the *fifth* Century. These were the FEET in *Christ's Mystical Body*; by which is signified, that the Christians of those Days, in the midst of worldly Affluence, outward Prosperity, and secular Employments, would *walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith they were called, with all Lowliness and Meekness, with Long-suffering, forbearing one another in Love, endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.* But in the next Age, and especially towards the latter End of it, the Piety of Christians declined apace, the Purity and Simplicity of the Gospel was more and more corrupted, and strange Innovations in Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship, began to be introduced; which made it more than ordinarily necessary for the Christians of those Times to turn their Thoughts more towards Heaven, and to arm themselves with that most useful Part of the *Armour of God*, which *St. Paul* recommends in the

4th Place: *Above all taking the Shield of Faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery Darts of the Wicked.* As every other
Piece

Piece of the *Military Armour* is made for the Defence of some *one particular Part*, this is design'd for the Defence of the *whole Man*, to repel or ward off every Assault, especially from that Part which is commonly distinguish'd by the Name of *the Body*. And this was the Case of the Christians of this Period, who lay exposed, in an eminent Degree, to all manner of Assaults and Temptations, to *all the fiery Darts of the Wicked*. And their only Defence and Security was the *Shield of Faith*; by which they were enabled, in the midst of a degenerate Age, to stand their Ground, and in a great measure to guard against all the open and secret Attempts of the Enemy. And as these are distinguish'd in *Christ's* Epistles to the Churches, for their Works of Piety, Compassion, and Charity, and are here suppos'd, by their Faith, to have overcome the World, and so to have been free, in a manner, from Earthly-mindedness and Sensuality, they may not improperly be stiled the *Belly or Bowels* in the *Mystical Body of Christ*, which, in all Engagements with an Enemy, a *Shield* is contrived more particularly to cover and defend.

5. *And take the Helmet of Salvation.* An *Helmet* is to guard and cover the *Head*; and the Christian Grace answering to and represented by this Part of the *Panoply*, is *Salvation*, or the *Hope of Salvation*, as 'tis expressly called in another Place, and for an *Helmet the Hope of Salvation*.—And as the
State

State of the Church, in this long Period, was much more degenerate, and the Case of Christians more deplorable, than in the former Age, there was need of a higher Degree of Faith, for the Support of their Virtue. And such I call *Hope*, according to that of St. Paul, *Faith is the Substance of Things HOPED for, the Evidence of Things not seen*; i. e. *Faith* represents to the Mind Things distant, future, and invisible, as if they were really and actually present; and then upon this View of them, the Mind proceeds to chuse, to desire, and to *hope* for them. So that *Hope* is an higher Degree of *Faith*, and a more vigorous and lively Principle, that will carry Men chearfully through the greatest Labours, Difficulties, and Dangers. And accordingly we may observe, that though St. John ascribes the Conquest of the World to *Faith*—*This is the Victory that overcometh the World, even your Faith*; yet he ascribes the Attainment of a Heavenly Disposition to *Hope*—*He that hath this Hope in him purifieth himself even as God is pure*. Now This was the very Case of those few faithful Christians in Comparison, in the dark Age of the Church, that, under the greatest Discouragements and Opposition, maintain'd and propagated the true Faith. To these our Blessed Saviour gives this Promise and Commendation in his Epistles: *They shall walk with me in White, for they are Worthy*. These consider'd as a Part of his *Mystical Body* were the

the Representatives of Himself as the HEAD, the most honourable and most useful and necessary Part of the Body, as consulting the Good of the Whole, and communicating Life to every Part; or to use St. Paul's Words, *from which all the Body by Joints and Bands having Nourishment ministred and knit together, increaseth with the Increase of God.* And such were these faithful Representatives of Christ, these *Primitive Protestants*: For had not this small Remnant been left to preserve and convey down to After-Times the true Faith of Christ, not any sound Part of his Church had been found upon Earth. And as *these* were enabled by a lively Hope, a *passive* Fortitude, and a prudent and exemplary Conduct, to support and defend the true Christian Doctrine and Practice, against all Opposition; so their Successors in the Faith were ordain'd by Providence as *active* Instruments, to revive, unfold, and establish the saving Truths and sublime Mysteries of Christianity, as a Means to secure and continue them to the World's End: And therefore are here directed and supposed by the Apostle,

6. To be arm'd with *the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.* This is the only Piece of Armour that is *offensive*: And though that Part of the Body which this Piece of Military Armour is designed for, is not here mentioned, yet 'tis easily understood to be the HAND, that noted Instrument of
Action

Action and Emblem of Power. And our pious Reformers, and all the sound succeeding Members of this Church, are those that constitute the HAND in the *Mystical Body of Christ*: And how *Active* and *Successful* These have been, I need not say. Let me only remind the Reader of what our Saviour himself declares of this sound Part of his Church, in his Epistles—*I know thy Works: Behold, I have set before thee an open Door, and no Man can shut it: For thou hast a little Strength, and hast kept my Word, and hast not denied my Name.* These *Works* and this *little Strength* have abundantly appear'd (to say nothing of their Character in other Respects) in the Writings, Preaching, and Discourses of the *English Clergy*, which (to the Honour of God be it spoken, and to the Praise of his Holy Name) have done Wonders in the World, and been the blessed Means of converting Thousands from the Error of their Ways, and of establishing others in a right Faith and suitable Practice. I shall only farther observe on these Words, that while we rightly divide and handle *the Word of God*, we are sure to use *the Sword of the Spirit*.

7. The last Piece of Armour mention'd by St. Paul, as belonging to the Panoply or compleat Armour of God, is the absolutely, continually, and universally necessary Duty of Prayer.—*Praying always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all Perseverance and Supplication*

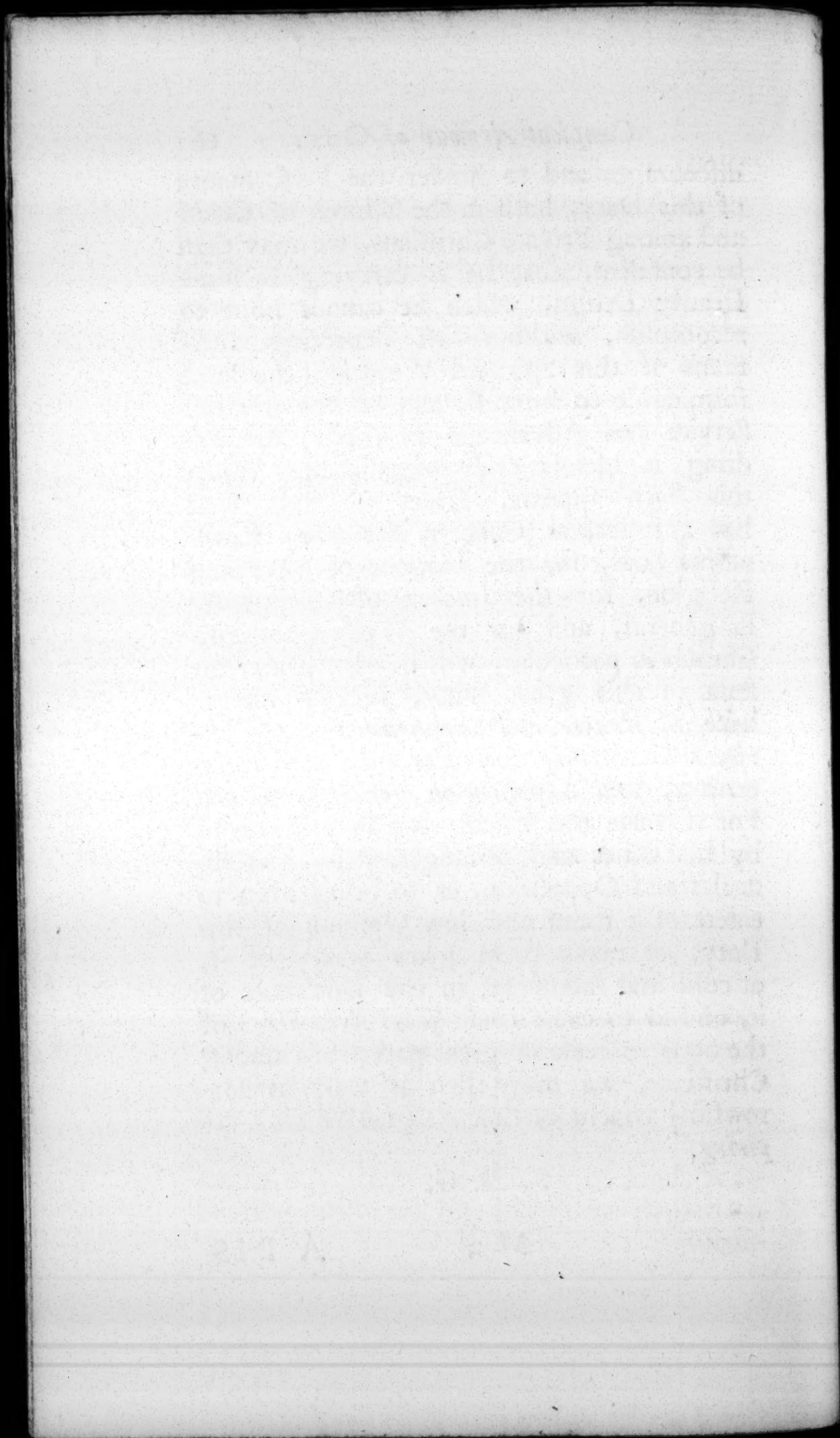
tion for all Saints. Here is no single Word to express this Part of the Christian Armour by, and no Intimation of any particular Part of the Body, to which it might be appropriated. And though we might apply this to the *Knees*, which are bended, or to the *Arms*, which are held up or stretch'd out in Prayer, as is represented in the Case of *Jacob's* wrestling with the Angel, and *Moses's* interceding for *Israel*, when fighting with *Amalek*; yet as the Apostle has taken no notice of Either, we may not improperly call it the *Breathing* of a Christian; *Prayer* being as necessary to the *Soul*, as *Breath* is to the *Body*. As the *Natural* Life can't subsist without the latter, so neither can the *Spiritual* without the former. And 'tis plain that St. Paul thought so, by his pressing this Duty with so much Earnestness and Zeal; and he seems to labour for Words to shew the full Extent and Importance of it. But though *Prayer* be as *necessary* as any other Part of the Christian Armour; though it is necessary at *all Times* and in *all Places*, for *all Churches* and for *all Persons*: yet there are *Times* and *Seasons*, when this will appear *more than ordinarily necessary*, when a Neglect of it will be of the most dangerous Consequence, and when we are to *watch thereunto with all Perseverance*. For Instance—When we cannot but be sensible by sad Experience, that the Enemy of Souls is labouring with all his Might to depreiate, discour-

discourage, and to hinder the Performance of this Duty, both in the Church of *Christ* and among Private Christians, we may then be confident, that he is carrying on some Deadly Design, which he cannot hope to accomplish, without first depriving Christians of this Spiritual Weapon (the most formidable to himself, and of the greatest Service and Advantage to them) or rendering it useless and insignificant. When this Sign appears, Every Christian that has any serious Concern for the Health of his Soul, for the Honour of God and Religion, for the Interest of Christianity in general, and for the Welfare of this Church in particular, will be earnest and instant in this great Duty, *praying always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all Perseverance, and Supplication for all Saints.* For if once the Enemy can so far prevail by his Wiles and Stratagems, by his Obstacles and Opposition, as to bring Men to entertain a mean and low Opinion of this Duty, to make them grow weary of it, or cold and indifferent in the Discharge of it, and so to cause these *pious Breathings* of the Soul to cease in great part from among Christians, we may then as truly as sorrowfully conclude, that *Religion is near expiring.*

S. D. G.

M 2

A DIS-



A
DISCOURSE
ON
Our Saviour's Beatitudes,

So far as they appear to have Relation to his
Character of the SEVEN CHURCHES.

DISCOURSE

ON

Our Saviour's Beatitudes

As they appear in the Gospel of St. Matthew

Character of the Seven Churches

M 3

A
D I S C O U R S E
O N

Our SAVIOUR'S Beatitudes, &c.

THERE have been Endeavours to account for the *Number* of the Beatitudes, and to shew why our Saviour should assign *Eight*, and no more. The *Extent* of his Design in this Particular may appear, in some measure, from the following Essay; which was not only to prescribe to his Followers a compendious System of the most necessary and the most excellent Virtues; but likewise to set a distinguishing Mark upon the several Ages of his Church, and to characterize its *sevenfold* State upon Earth.

The first Beatitude should be consider'd not as a *single*, separate, or solitary Virtue, but as a *general* or complex one, that is both the *Foundation* and *Cement* of all the rest; as it not only supports, but unites and runs through all and every Part. And this is the true State of the *Primitive Apostolical Church*,

which was founded in Humility or *Poverty of Spirit*, and to which all other Churches must be conformable, if they would hold to the Foundation, and not build upon the Sand. Now this Church our Blessed Saviour takes no particular or distinct Notice of in his Epistles, because it was *past* when he sent his Angel to St. John, or however was to end with the Death of that Apostle: And his Design was only to *shew unto his Servant things that were to come*. Leaving out then the *first general Beatitude*, or taking it only as the *Foundation* of the rest, there remain seven other more *particular* ones, answering, in exact Order, the distinct Characters of the seven Churches.

1. *Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.*

The Church of Christ for the three first Centuries was in a *State of Mourning*; according to what our Lord expressly and solemnly told his Disciples, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the World shall rejoice: And ye shall be sorrowful, but your Sorrow shall be turned into Joy*. But as this remarkable Period is subdivided into three distinct lesser Periods, *viz.* the *Apostolick*, the *Ephesine*, and the *Smyranean*; the *Mourning State* is more peculiarly appropriated to the *second*, which was properly and in the strictest Sense a State of *penitential Discipline*; the *first State* of the Church

Church being chiefly distinguishable for its *Humility*, as the *third* was for its *Meekness*, or unparallel'd and invincible *Patience*. The predominant Character of the Church in this *second* Period, both in our Lord's Epistles and in his Prayer, is *Love*: But here she is represented under another Character, that of *Mourning*; which yet is no other than the Effect and Consequence of the former. For *Love* is naturally productive of true Christian Mourning: We cannot but grieve for having offended the Person we love, whenever we are made sensible of it. We must then be angry and displeased with ourselves, for having provok'd and displeased so gracious, so tender, and so indulgent a Being, so high and near a Relation, as God is to us; who has permitted and encouraged us to cry *Abba, Father*. This is the Account which St. Paul gives of true godly Sorrow: *For behold, says he, this self-same thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what Carefulness it wrought in you; yea, what Clearing of yourselves; yea, what Indignation; yea, what Fear; yea, what vehement Desire; yea, what Zeal; yea, what Revenge!* Besides, we are to consider the *Ephesine* Christians, for the most part, as immediate Converts from *Judaism* or *Gentilism*; and therefore, though after their Conversion their Sins were pardon'd and done away in *Baptism*, yet a long Course of Repentance, that is, of Sorrow and Suffering, was then perhaps more than ordinarily necessary to secure

cure their Faith and Perseverance against the many violent Assaults both of Terror and Temptation, they were to expect to meet with from the World. And this might be one *Prudential Reason* for the very strict and severe Discipline of the Church in that Age, *namely*, to prevent the new Converts from lapsing by the Warning of such frequent and terrible Examples of Penance before their Eyes. Or however that be, 'tis certain that we have a *fuller* Account of *Penance* and *Penitents*, during this Period, than in any other Period of the Christian Church. Upon which account, 'tis here fitly represented by our Saviour as the Church's *Mourning-State*.

2. *Blessed are the Meek ; for they shall inherit the Earth.*

That this Beatitude peculiarly respects the Church in *Smyrna*, is, I think, clear and manifest beyond Contradiction. There's no Society of Christians we read of, that ever practis'd this amiable Virtue so fully and universally, and in so high and astonishing a manner, as the suffering Saints of this Period. What is said of the Man *Moses*, was eminently true of *them* ; they were *meek above all the Men that were upon the Face of the Earth*. They not only took joyfully the spoiling of their Goods, but likewise submitted to the heaviest Torments, the bitterest Reproaches, and the cruellest Kinds of Death, with a Meekness and Patience that was invincible ;
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and, like their great Master, were brought as *Lambs to the Slaughter*, and as *Sheep before their Shearers are dumb*, so they opened not their *Mouths*, unless it were to bless God and their Persecutors too, for bringing them to die for their Religion. This was true likewise of other States of the Church, but not so peculiarly and universally as of this. But 'tis not my Business here to enlarge: All I have to do, is only to point out the *Parallel* between our Lord's *Epistles* and his *Beatitudes*, with respect to the Order of Time, and their Agreement in Character. And therefore I shall only farther observe, that if in the Duty here recommended to all Christians, our Saviour had an Eye more particularly to the *Smyrneans*, then it follows, that the Beatitude or Reward annex'd to this Virtue, must have respect to the *Millennial State*; since these primitive and most eminent Patterns of *Meekness* were so far from inheriting the Earth, that they were not suffer'd to live upon it, and, as one expresses it, could hardly find Room under it.

3. *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after Righteousness; for they shall be filled.*

This Beatitude is harder to be understood and explain'd than any of the rest, by reason of the various Acceptations of the Word *Righteousness* in Scripture: But all of them, so far as they relate to this Place, are reducible

cible to these four. 1. As it imports *Justification*, or the being acquitted from Guilt and accounted righteous before God. 2. As it stands for the single Virtue of *Justice* or *Honesty*, which is the Sense Mr. *Blair* contends for in his Exposition, and that because the other Beatitudes are all confin'd and applied to *single* Virtues. 3. As it is taken in a complex Sense, to denote the *whole moral Law*; which is the most common Acceptation of the Word in this Place. 4. As it may signify what St. *Paul* calls *the Righteousness which is of God by Faith*. It seems most likely that our Saviour understood this Phrase in one of the two last Senses, or in both together, though not exclusive of the other two. Indeed the third necessarily includes the second, and the last the first: For the *whole moral Law* must comprehend *Justice*, and the *Righteousness of Faith* is the only thing now by which a Sinner can be *justified*. The Difficulty will be, to apply this in such a manner to the State of the Church in *Pergamus*, as to make it the *peculiar* Characteristick of that Church. But this may be found to be a Difficulty in *Appearance* only, and not in *Reality*. The distinguishing Character of this Church, in our Lord's Epistles and Prayer, is an *Eminency of Zeal and Prosperity*; to both which this Beatitude has a particular reference. For as the *Smyranean* Christians may truly be said to have hungered and thirsted after *Martyrdom*, or to be admitted into the
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the *Kingdom of Glory*; so the *Pergameans* may as properly be said to have hungered and thirsted after the *Righteousness of Christ*, that is, to be made Members of the Christian Church, or admitted into the *Kingdom of Grace*. After the Conversion of *Constantine* to the Christian Faith, there was a remarkable Emulation and Striving, as it were, who should first become Christians. The *Pagan* Priests then saw that God was on the Side of the Christians, and that *the World was going after them*. They saw their own Worship despised, their Temples deserted, and the old Institutions and celebrated Precepts of their Philosophers and Wise Men forced to give way to the powerful Efficacy of the Christian Doctrine, and the almost irresistible Force of simple and naked Truth. For now the People seeing through the Vanity and Madness of Idolatry, and sensible of the Weakness and Unprofitableness of the *Heathen* Morality, eagerly long'd to be made Sharers in a Religion, whose miraculous Progress loudly proclaim'd the Divinity of its Author, and to partake of a Righteousness that would set them free from the Bondage of Sin and Satan. Accordingly Multitudes of them throng'd and press'd continually into the Church; and within a few Years the greatest Part of the Empire became *Christian*. Then indeed did the *Kingdom of Heaven suffer Violence, and the Violent took it by force*. Then was fulfilled in Part that Prophecy of *Zachary*,

chary, (c. viii. v. 23.) Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, In those Days it shall come to pass, that ten Men shall take hold out of all Languages of the Nations, even shall take hold of the Skirt of him that is a Few, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you. This Text, as the learned Mr. Lowth observes, imports the Heathen applying themselves to the Christians (called here by the Name of *Jews*) especially to the Pastors and Ministers of the Church, for Instruction, in order to qualify themselves for Admittance into the Church: so that as the *Gentile* Profelytes, for the first three hundred Years, were *invited, induced, and drawn* into the Church by the persuasive Force of Preaching, by the commanding Power of Miracles, and by the Courage and Constancy of the Martyrs; so the *Gentiles* of this Period, after the Conversion of their Emperor, *voluntarily offer'd* themselves, and *pressed* to be admitted into the Christian Fold; which was sufficient for our Saviour to denominate and distinguish this Part of his Church from the Character of those that *hunger and thirst after Righteousness*: To which he adds this gracious Promise, that *they shall be filled*: And this Promise was fulfilled in the *Pergamean* Christians, who were replenish'd by him with inward Grace and Illumination, and beautified with outward Splendor and Magnificence.

4. *Blessed are the Merciful; for they shall obtain Mercy.*

We have seen the Church in her *penitent, passive, and peaceful* State; and may now behold her *active* and laborious, and like her Blessed Lord, *going about doing Good*. The Number of Converts in the former Period made it necessary in this to set about Works of Piety and Charity; which were indeed begun before, but left to the Church in *Thyatira* to carry on and compleat. The *Gentile* Converts might now say, as in the Prophet, *The Place is too strait for me, give place to me that I may dwell*. They wanted Places of publick Worship, Schools and Seminaries for the religious Education of Youth, settled Revenues in Houses and Land for the Support and Maintenance of the Clergy, Hospitals and Lazar-Houses for the Sick and Needy, &c. All which, and every thing else tending to the Relief and Benefit of Mankind in their Bodies and in their Souls, were abundantly supplied and provided by the Care, Industry, and Liberality of the faithful *Thyatirians*: Many of whom, not content with domestick Charities, travelled, like the Apostles, into distant Parts, to spread the Light of the Gospel, and became the happy Instruments of converting many Nations to the Christian Faith, and *ours* among the rest; which was a *second time* recover'd from *Paganism* to the Profession of *Christianity* by
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the zealous Endeavours of *Austin* the Monk, and his Companions, towards the End of the *Pergamean*, or the Beginning of the *Thyatirian* Age. And our Nation has ever since been alike famous for Works of Piety, Mercy, and Charity: And our present *Incorporated Societies*, for propagating the Gospel in foreign Parts, for promoting Christian Knowledge and Reformation of Manners at home, and for increasing, encouraging, and regulating the Charity-Schools, or otherwise employ'd in erecting New Churches, relieving distressed Protestants, and redeeming Christian Slaves out of Captivity, bear no small Resemblance to the zealous and charitable Part of the Church in *Thyatira*; which is so particularly commended and distinguish'd by our Saviour in his Epistles and in this Beatitude—*Blessed are the Merciful; for they shall obtain Mercy.*

5. *Blessed are the pure in Heart; for they shall see God.*

This Beatitude is exactly parallel to the Character our Saviour gives of those few Names even in *Sardis*, who had not defiled their Garments, viz. with *Popish* Errors and corrupt Practices, and who therefore obtain'd from him this glorious Promise and further Commendation, *They shall walk with me in White, for they are worthy.* I need only refer the Reader to my Explanation of that Passage, for a clear Understanding and right Appli-

Application of this Beatitude. For to what Body of Christians can the Character of *Pure in Heart* be more justly or suitably ascrib'd, than to the brave *primitive Protestants*, who liv'd in the most dark and degenerate Age, when there was (only themselves excepted) an universal Corruption of Faith and Manners; and yet held fast their Integrity, and maintain'd and defended the true Catholick Faith against all the Power and Policy of the Church of *Rome*, in the Height of its Grandeur and usurp'd Supremacy; and at last *resisted unto Blood*?

6. *Blessed are the Peacemakers; for they shall be called the Children of God.*

By this time, I hope the Reader may in some measure be convinced that the Parallel I have drawn between *Christ's* Epistles and his Beatitudes, and the History of the several Ages of his Church down to the Reformation, is neither forced, unnatural, or ill-grounded. And I might now leave it to his own Judgment, to make Application of this Beatitude. For to whom does it more justly or properly belong, than to our *Mother-Church*, the patient and peaceable *Church of England*? which has ever shew'd the *greatest Disposition* to Peace and Unity; and consider'd in her *Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship*, is the *greatest Peacemaker* in the World: For which I might appeal to common Experience; or if the Reader desire further Information;

mation, he may consult Dr. *Puller's Moderation of the Church of England*, together with the late Answers to Mr. *Neale's History of the Puritans*. As she did not depart or separate from the Church of *Rome*, without the most cogent Reasons and plainest Necessity; so she took particular Care to give no just or real Cause for Any to separate from her: And whatever has been deem'd so, she has from time to time been ready to submit to a Re-examination, and upon clear Proof to amend or lay aside; than which there cannot well be a clearer or stronger Evidence of a *peaceable* Disposition. But when, in a Conference held for that purpose, it plainly appear'd that nothing less would satisfy those in the Separation, than the abolishing her Form of Government, which is *truly Apostolical*, she then wisely resolv'd not to purchase Peace at so dear a rate, but chose to please God rather than Men. And *blessed* are such *Peacemakers*, as are willing to sacrifice *All but the Truth* for the sake of Peace, and ready to do All that *lawfully* they may to promote Unity and Concord. *They shall be called the Children of God*; they shall not only be esteem'd and treated as such by God himself, but have the Character and Reputation of such *among all wise Men*. And whatever some peevish and perverse Spirits may object to the contrary, *All Generations shall call them blessed*. They shall be *called* blessed in this World, as the true and genuine Children of their Heavenly Father;

Father; and they shall *be* blessed in the next, as the true and undoubted Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven; which is a Kingdom of Peace, as well as of Glory.

7. *Blessed are they which are persecuted for Righteousness-sake; for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are ye, when Men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of Evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your Reward in Heaven: for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you.*

The Church in *Laodicea* is reproved by our Saviour for *Self-Ignorance* and *Lukewarmness*, Both Enemies to Peace and true Piety. The Mind of Man can never be idle, whatever the Man himself may be: If his Thoughts don't love to dwell at home, they will be employ'd too much on Objects abroad. And this makes Men *credulous* and *censorious*: For he that is ignorant of himself and of his own State, will be meddling and busying himself with That of other Men; and having little or no Sense of his own Sins, will shew no Pity for theirs. And as *Self-Ignorance* naturally disposes Men to be rigid Observers of the *Vices* and Follies of Others; so *Lukewarmness* as strongly inclines them to malign and depretiate whatever is *Virtuous* and Praise-worthy in them. For they who content themselves with this low and languid

State of Goodness, are unwilling to see or acknowledge any higher Degrees of Goodness in Others. This silent upbraiding of their Faults and Defects, which in generous Souls would kindle a noble Emulation, only prompts the Lukewarm to base Attempts to undermine their Virtue or their Character, and either to make, or to represent them to be as indifferent to Religion as themselves. Now our Blessed Saviour in his excellent Form of Prayer directs us, in such a *Laodicean* State, to pray that *we be not led into Temptation*, that is, as to the Case before us, that we be not too much exposed to the Vexations, Hatred, and Insults of this sort of Men, lest we *be overcome of Evil*. But if it is our Lot to be so exposed, then, for an Encouragement to Perseverance, he assures us in this Beatitude, that *suffering* for his sake, or *for Righteousness sake*, is Matter of Joy and not of Grief. *Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your Reward in Heaven*. But perhaps this Part of the Beatitude belongs more properly to the *Antichristian* State; the Difference between which and the *Laodicean*, as to *Time*, is known only to God: They are not divided or distinguished in this Beatitude, nor (as we may see hereafter) in the last Petition of the Lord's Prayer: from whence we may infer that one will insensibly slide into the other, and that we shall not be able to perceive when the *Laodicean* ends, and the *Antichristian* begins; and so it will be difficult

cult hereafter to know, whether we are in the former or in the latter. But to leave the *Laodicean*, of which enough may have been said already, I shall, for a Conclusion, briefly shew that the *greatest* Suffering for Righteousness sake will be in the *Antichristian* State. At that time, (to use the Apostle's Words) the true Christians must *wrestle not against Flesh and Blood, but against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of the Darkness of this World, against spiritual Wickedness in high Places*. Now a Man often finds himself to be no Match for one of the *same* Nature and Condition with himself: But for *Flesh* to contend with *Spirit*, a frail earthly Creature with active invisible Beings (when their Power too will be greatly enlarged) is a Match so unequal, that nothing less than a full Assurance of the powerful Assistance of God and his holy Angels, contesting in their Behalf, can give the Christians of those Days the least Hopes of Success. St. Paul has a Passage, which, if consider'd in the Original, will give us some Light into this Matter, and help to confirm this Hope in us. 'Tis this—*There has no Temptation taken you but such as is common to Man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the Temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it*. The former Part, I conceive, ought to be render'd thus—*There has no*

Temptation taken you but such as is HUMAN *. Our Translators seem not to have apprehended the full Scope of this Word; and therefore chose to give what they thought the Sense of it, instead of a literal Translation. But the Expression is *emphatical*, and strongly intimates, that there are some Temptations *more than Human*, even such as may truly and strictly be term'd *Diabolical*, according to the Description which this same Apostle gives of the great Temptations under *Antichrist* in 2 *Thess.* ii. which Place plainly confirms and justifies the Distinction implied in this Text between *Human* Temptations and *Diabolical*. The latter are what the *Israelites* in the Wilderness (as the Context mentions) partly underwent; for they were *destroyed of Serpents and of the Destroyer*: and what the Christians in the last Days will undergo, in the highest Degree. But the Temptations of the *Corinthians*, and of all the *Primitive Christians*, were, properly speaking, no other than *Human*. For though their Persecutions under the *Roman Emperors* might be begun and carried on by the Suggestion and at the Instigation of the *Devil*; yet there were none but *human Means* and *human Instruments* employ'd: Whereas the *Antichristian* Persecution will be managed and carried on by Means and Methods *invisible* and *preternatural*, and yet hardly

* ἀνθρώπων.

distinguish.

distinguishable from the *common* Workings of Nature and Providence. For the *Mystery of Iniquity* will then be arriv'd at its highest Pitch of Perfection. Variety of strange Signs and surprising *Phænomena* will abound, *with all Deceivableness of Unrighteousness*, and the utmost Refinements of Sorcery and Fascination. Then will *Antichrist* and his two false Prophets go out into different Parts of the World, to delude and deceive the Nations, and by false Miracles and *lying Wonders* will raise the Admiration and secure the Belief of their Followers, and lead them captive at their Will. And whom they cannot *captive*, they will *persecute*, by Means partly *Natural* and partly *Magical*, or by instilling a malignant and baneful Influence on the Powers of Nature, which will then be abandon'd to the Overflowings of the Curse, and subject to the greatest Tyranny and Bondage. So that, upon this account, the *Antichristian* Persecution will exceed all others that have gone before it, as much as the Powers of *Hell* exceed those of *Earth* in Cunning, Force, and Cruelty. But now under such formidable Trials and such amazing Persecutions, when the very *Foundations will be cast down*, *what can the Righteous do*, or how can they hope to escape? St. Paul tells them in the Passage before consider'd, which may be thus supplied—*There has no Temptation taken you, but such as is Human: But (if any Temptation more than Human should overtake you,*

yet) God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the Temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. We have an Instance parallel to this in those Words of the Psalmist, which must be alike supplied—*The blood-thirsty and deceitful Men shall not live out half their Days:* (But if they live out their whole Days) *nevertheless my Trust shall be in thee, O Lord.* If we take the Words of St. Paul without the forementioned Supplement or something like it, they must lose much of their Force and Persuasiveness: But 'tis plain that they refer not to *common* and *ordinary*, but to *extraordinary* and *preternatural* Trials, such as St. Paul himself once labour'd under, when he was *pressed out of measure, above Strength, insomuch that he despaired even of Life*; such as will require *uncommon* Succour and Support, and some strange unlook'd-for Method of Escape, like that of God's opening a Passage (an *exitum, a Way to escape*) through the Red Sea. If we understand the Words in this Sense, they contain a most Powerful Motive not to faint or despond under the sharpest Trials and most pressing Necessities, even when Things appear past Remedy, and there is no Prospect of Relief. And such will, in a great measure, be the Case of Christians in the Days I am speaking of. But then, in those Days, we may be sure that God will not leave himself without Witness, nor his Servants without
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out Succour and Support, suited and proportioned to their Exigencies and Dangers, and the Measure and Weight of their Sufferings. As the *Temptations* that are to try them, will, in some Respects, be *more than human*, and such as are *not common to Man*; so their *Defence* against them will be proportionably great and extraordinary. Though their Case will sometimes seem desperate, like that of the *Israelites*, hemm'd in between the *Egyptians* and the *Red Sea*; yet they may assure themselves that God is still at hand to save them, and will open a Way for their Escape, by sending them powerful Auxiliaries, and uncommon Assurances, beyond what they can even hope or imagine. For this last Conflict of the Church will be like the first *War in Heaven*, when *Michael and his Angels* fought against the *Dragon*; and the *Dragon* fought and his *Angels*, and prevailed not; neither was their Place found any more in Heaven. The same spiritual Combatants will be engaged in this *last*, as were in the *first War*: And tho' the Contest, on the Side of the persecuted Christians, will be the hottest and sharpest that can well be conceiv'd; yet, if they be but true to themselves and their Saviour, Victory and Triumph will assuredly attend them at length, and crown all their Labours. In the mean while, Repentance and Prayer, tough Patience, Reservedness, and Taciturnity, will be their best Defence and Security against the Malice and Subtlety of their spiritual

ritual Adversaries: According to the Prophet, *The Prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it is an Evil Time; yea, the Time of the Evil One.* And indeed the Christians of those Days, if they will act with Prudence, and secure the Peace of their own Minds, must live as Men dead, while among the Living. They must commit their whole Cause *to him who judgeth righteously*, and be content to wait his time for a Deliverance, and not anticipate the Methods of his Providence, which are all design'd (how harsh, absurd, or unaccountable soever they may appear) either to save them from the Wrath to come, or to refine and purify their Souls, and prepare them for brighter Crowns of Glory. Therefore this Beatitude of their Lord should ever be uppermost in their Thoughts—*Blessed are they which are persecuted for Righteousness-sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are ye, when Men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of Evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your Reward in Heaven: for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you.*

S. D. G.

A B R I E F
E X P O S I T I O N
O N T H E
L O R D ' S - P R A Y E R ,

As bearing a manifest Reference or
Allusion to CHRIST'S *Seven Epistles*, or
to the *Sevenfold State of CHRIST'S Church*
upon Earth.

EXPOSIT

FOR

OF THE

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A B R I E F
E X P O S I T I O N
O N T H E
L O R D ' S - P R A Y E R, &c.

AFTER so many Comments and Discourses on the *Lord's-Prayer*, and especially after a late Excellent Performance of this Kind by the learned Dr. *Mangey*, who has given us the Sense of both Antients and Moderns on this copious and important Subject, with great Improvements of his own; it may be thought *needless* and *presumptuous* to attempt a *new* Exposition of it. *It may be so*, and there is no preventing Men's *First* Thoughts. But whether, upon farther Examination, this Divine Form has yet been thoroughly explain'd, or whether something be not still wanting to answer up to the full Extent of its Views, and the Comprehensiveness of its Matter and Language, the Reader is left to judge from the following Essay, intended chiefly to confirm and illustrate the preceding Interpretation of the *Se-*
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ven Epistles, but serving likewise at the same time to give him a fuller and nobler Idea of this admirable Form of Prayer; which, tho' of general Use, and suited to the Condition of every Age of the Church, and of every Society of Christians, will be found perhaps (in its several distinct Parts and Branches) more peculiarly proper and applicable to *some Times and Persons*, than to *others*.

Let it here only be premised, that as the *Prefatory Title* or *Introductory Address* is a lively Representation of the Church of *Christ* during her *Infancy* and *Minority*, or of the *Primitive Ephesine Church* in the larger Sense, that is, for the three first Centuries; so the *Conclusion* or *Doxology* is a plain and proper Description of the Church when come to its *full Age* and *Maturity*, to a *perfect Manhood*, to the *Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ*, as pointing directly at the glorious *Millennium*, or triumphant State of the Church; during which State, *Praise* and *Doxology* will be the chief Employment of the Saints upon Earth, or of the Inhabitants of the *New Jerusalem*. And though 'tis the Opinion of many of the Learned, that the *Doxology* is no Original Part of the *Lord's-Prayer*, but inserted long after from the *Rituals*; yet those who assert this allow that the Church has constantly used the Prayer in *St. Matthew's Gospel*, (in which only the *Doxology* is found) which has been the Means to preserve it so entire, that there is not one
various

various Reading in the whole; and that the Gospel of St. *Matthew* was translated into *Greek* from the *Hebrew*, in the Apostles Days: And 'tis farther acknowledged, that the *Doxology* is extant in *most* of the *Greek* Copies, and in some ancient Fathers of the *Greek Church*; and how it should be *extant* in *These*, unless it belong'd to the Original Text, is not, I think, so easy to be accounted for, as is the *Omission* of it in *Others*. But whether This be allow'd to be genuine or not, the Preface and the Six Petitions of the *Lord's-Prayer* (which are uncontested) are sufficient to prove what I propose, as they will be found to correspond exactly with *Christ's* Seven Epistles to the Seven Churches, both as to *Name* and *Character* and *Order of Succession*, as shall now be shewn.

The Preface to the Lord's-Prayer.

OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN.

The Character of the *Ephesine Church* is *Love*; her Condition or Privilege that of the *First-born*, by which she cries, *Abba, Father*: For this is truly the *Church of the First-born*, which is written in *Heaven*. It has been observed by the Antients, says Dr. *Mangey*, that there is neither Command nor Allowance in the Old Testament to call God *Father*. Therefore when he Prophetically promises, that *he will be to them a Father, and they shall be to him as Sons*, he represents that
Nearness

Nearness of Relation, that would hereafter be founded by the *Messiah*. Now this high Privilege, which belongs to *all* sincere Christians in general, is, in a more emphatical, peculiar, and primary Sense, applicable to the *Primitive* Christians, who were the first Adopted ones of the Christian Family, the first Redeemed from the *Bondage of Corruption into the glorious Liberty of the Children of God*. Before their Conversion they were Servants and Slaves, being in *Bondage under the Elements of this World*, either as *Jews* or *Gentiles*; and as such, had no Right of Inheritance, no certain or durable Settlement: For *the Servant abideth not in the House for ever, but the Son abideth ever*. As they were likewise Servants before, they were in a State of Ignorance and Darknes: For *the Servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth*; but the Secrets of the Family are communicated to the *Children*. These peculiar Privileges the First Christians were not insensible of; but, by a constant, chearful, and filial Obedience, *shew'd forth the Praises of him who had called them out of Darknes into his marvellous Light*, from Captivity to Liberty, from Misery to Glory, from Death to Life, from a short and precarious Tenure in this World, to a sure and everlasting Inheritance in the next. And therefore, as they had the *first* and *best* Right and Title to call God *Father*; so did they make use of this distinguishing Favour, in the most *affectionate* Manner, upon the most
generous

generous Principles, and to the *noblest* Ends. Their Hearts were constantly inflamed with Love, their Lives always a ready Sacrifice; their *Conversation was in Heaven*. Consequently they could most properly, and in the most genuine Sense, address themselves to God, under this Title, *Our Father which art in Heaven*. And God was not wanting on his Part, to give the most ample Proof and Testimony of his Paternal Regard and Affection for them, both as they were the *First-born* and the *Infants* or *Minors* of his new Family. Infants or Little Children are properly call'd *Innocents*, as they are the greatest Remains of Innocence, in the *natural* way, that are left in the World. And such were the Primitive Christians, in the *spiritual* Sense; and as such the Delights and Darlings of their Heavenly Father. Parents, we know, are generally more pleased with their Children while *young*, smile more upon them, take them oftener into their Arms, and shew them greater Favour, than when come to *riper* Years. This was the Case of the Christian Church during her *Infancy* and *Minority*; as may farther appear by considering the *Ephesine* Christians as the *First-born*, and as such favour'd with a greater Share and Portion of the *Paternal Benediction*: which was very great under the *Jewish* Oeconomy with respect to *Particulars*, but if consider'd with regard to the *whole Body of Christians*, during the first State or Period of Christiani-

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nity, was very remarkable and distinguishing. For one of the shining Privileges of the *Christian Birth-right* in this respect, was the *Charismata* or miraculous Gifts bestow'd on the Primitive Church, and upon that only; which made her so eminent and illustrious in the Eye of the World.

The First Petition.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME.

Though there are many ways of *Hallowing*, or Sanctifying, or Glorifying the *Name* of God, yet I shall mention only one here, as being That which I take to be principally meant in this Place; and that is by suffering, or by a *Passive* Obedience: For what concerns our *Active* Obedience is particularly pray'd for under the third Petition. That Suffering is *one*, if not the *chiefest* Means whereby we are capable of *glorifying* God, or doing Honour to his Name, cannot be doubted by Any who consider that *Martyrdom* is the *highest* Pitch and Perfection of Obedience. For *greater Love*, and consequently greater Obedience, *hath no Man than this, that a Man lay down his Life for his Friend*. We are therefore exhorted by the Evangelical Prophet to *glorify God in the Fires*; which is thus explained by St. Peter, *Glorify God in the Day of Visitation*; and was fully exemplified and illustrated by our blessed Saviour, according to that Declaration of his a
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little before his Passion, *Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him.* This he spake when *Judas* went out with a Design to betray him; and he seems to exult and triumph, upon the very Prospect of the Sufferings he was to undergo, that not only himself, but his *Father* would be glorified thereby. Indeed the Redemption of the World is God's *Great Glory*: And this Redemption was founded in the Death and Sufferings of the *Messiah*, the *Head* of the Church, and must be finish'd and completed by the Sufferings of his *Members*. And this was more eminently the Case of the *Smyranean* Christians, whose Blood shed in the Cause of *Christ*, seem'd intended by Providence to do the greatest Honour to the Christian Name, and to propagate a Generation of Faithful Christians to the End of the World. In this Case, God, as it were, pawn'd and engag'd his Honour upon the Patience and Perseverance of his Servants. He call'd forth his Champions to the Combat, set Men and Devils against them. If they flinch'd, he knew his Honour must suffer for it, and the Progress and Propagation of Christianity be stopp'd at once: But if they stood their Ground, and maintain'd their Temper and Constancy in the midst of the sharpest Trials and Persecutions, this would erect a lasting Trophy to his Glory, confirm the Truth of his Religion beyond all Possibility of reasonable Exception, do Justice to all his Attributes,

butes, and bring in Multitudes of Converts into his Church. And this we find true in fact; for Men were every where ready to embrace and to acknowledge the Divinity of a Doctrine that carried its Professors to such a Height of Piety, Fortitude, and Charity, as was never known in the World before. Thus highly is God glorified, and his Name hallowed, by a patient suffering according to his Will. For these Reasons, as well as others that may appear hereafter, I cannot but conclude that our Saviour had a particular Eye to the *Smyranean* State, or to the *Dioctlesian* Persecution, when he directed his Disciples to say, *Hallowed be thy Name.*

The Second Petition.

THY KINGDOM COME.

By the *Kingdom of God* we are undoubtedly to understand in the first place, the Establishment of Christianity in the Hearts of Men. 2. Its Establishment in the World by Human Laws. 3. Its Triumphant State, during the *Millennium*; and 4. Its perfect Consummation in the Kingdom of Glory. The first is commonly call'd the *Kingdom of Grace*, and is always beginning, increasing, or declining; and therefore we are always to pray for its Settlement where it is wanting, for its Enlargement and Confirmation where it is begun, for its Advancement and Continuance where it is increasing, and for its Reno-

Renovation where it is declining. We do not find by any Expressions that are used by *John Baptist*, by our Saviour, or by his Apostles at their first Mission, that the Kingdom of God was *then come*, but only that it was *near at hand*. Yea, the Apostles themselves, before our Saviour's Ascension, were not duly sensible of the *Nature* of this Kingdom, nor consequently qualified to teach it to others. Therefore all that they could do, in way of Preparation, was to preach and press upon Men the great Duty of Repentance—*Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*. The *First Coming* therefore of the Kingdom of God, I take to be the *miraculous Descent of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost*, when a Church was gather'd at once, all its Members illuminated and sanctified, replenished with spiritual Gifts, and become fit Subjects of *Christ's* spiritual Kingdom. There were then outward Testimonies of extraordinary inward Endowments, and from this Time the Divine Strength was made perfect in Human Weakness. And as under the Covenant of Grace, no Blessings or Graces are to be expected by Christians without ardent Prayer and Supplication; so this first Coming of the Kingdom of God was to be *pray'd for* before it came. Our Saviour indeed only commanded his Disciples in general to *tarry in the City of Jerusalem until they were endued with Power from on High*. But their own Sense and Piety easily

directed them to the proper Method of obtaining the Performance of this Promise; and accordingly, when the Holy Ghost came upon them, he found them all employ'd in Prayer and Supplication. And we may be sure, that the Prayer which their Lord oblig'd them constantly to use, was not omitted on this Occasion; in which they did *indefinitely* at least pray for this *First* Coming of the Kingdom of God, that is, for the Descent of the Holy Ghost, by which the *Kingdom of Grace* was founded and established.

The Second Signification of the Words is likewise past with relation to Us, and has long since been fulfilled; though 'tis what we have little Reason to doubt our Saviour had a principal Regard to in this Petition: For a *Kingdom* must be very incomplete and defective without any *outward* and visible Means of Support. It may struggle a long time to acquire such a Power, and have the Hearts and Affections and best Endeavours of its several Constituents, in order to attain it: But still it cannot strictly be denominated a *Kingdom*, till 'tis able to *protect* and *defend* its Members. Christianity seated only in the *Heart*, was like a Soul without its Body; but when it climb'd up into Power, commanded Crowns and Sceptres, had *Kings* for its *Nursing Fathers*, and *Queens* for its *Nursing-Mothers*, it assumed its native Body, and appear'd in its proper intended Form, that is, like its Author, who is both *Priest* and *King*,
yea,

yea, *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*. When therefore our Saviour directed his Disciples to pray, *thy Kingdom come*, we may with the greatest Reason suppose that he had an Eye to the *Pergamean State*, or the Establishment of his Religion by Human Laws; that after it should escape the House of Bondage, come out of the fiery Furnace, and pass through its Wilderness-State, it might arrive at the Land of Promise, and from thenceforth prosper more or less in the World till his *Second Coming*, as the *Jewish Religion* did till his *First*. This doubtless is one principal Meaning of these Words, *thy Kingdom come*; where by praying likewise that this Kingdom may *come*, we pray not only for its Hastening and Beginning, but also for its Completion and Perfection by several Steps and Gradations. Which therefore we properly pray for in the

Third Place, when we pray for the hastening of its *Triumphant State*, which is to commence in the last Days, and is what we now understand by the *Millennium*. For that the Saints shall reign upon Earth *a thousand Years*, is the express Testimony of St. *John*, and was the concurrent Opinion of the Primitive Fathers; and this State we have largely describ'd by the Prophets, particularly in the two last Chapters of the *Revelation*, and may, for the most part, be understood in a literal Sense. For 'tis a safe Rule, that the *literal Sense* of Scripture ought always to be

preferred, where there is no manifest Absurdity or Contradiction: And that there is none in the present Case, let it only be consider'd, that God *originally* design'd Man for a *Paradisaical* State, that is, for the Enjoyment of a pure Earthly Happiness in a State of the greatest Innocence and Perfection he is capable of on this side Heaven. Now *the Gifts and Calling of God are without Repentance*. The Sin of Man may *postpone*, but cannot *frustrate* the Decrees of the Almighty; and therefore if this State could not, through Man's Disobedience, be enjoy'd in the *Beginning* of the World, it shall be reserv'd for him in the *End*. God *curst* the Earth, after Man had sinned; but it shall be *blessed*, after he is purified. The pious Patriarchs before the Flood liv'd to a very great Age, and some of them seem'd to bid fair for reaching the appointed Term of Duration in the Region of Paradise: But God cut them all short, and suffer'd not one of them to arrive to the Age of a *thousand Years*; which is to be the peculiar Lot and Privilege of the Saints at the End of the World, and from whence that glorious and triumphant State takes its Denomination.

Fourthly, and lastly, By the *Coming of the Kingdom of God*, is most commonly meant the *Kingdom of Glory*, or the Church in its ultimate and utmost Perfection and Glory: When the Kingdom of God will appear in its full Magnificence and Grandeur, and God
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be acknowledg'd, in the most extensive Sense, and the most transcendent and unparallel'd Manner, *King of Kings and Lord of Lords*; when every Subject of his Dominion shall inherit all things, and every Saint shall reign, and have a Share in all the Royalties of that Kingdom, whose lowest Degree of Happiness infinitely surpasses the highest Dignity, and the greatest Felicity of this lower World. But then as this is to be the last State of Things, so will it be the most perfect and the most durable, the Sum Total of all our Wishes, the End of all our Hopes, yea, all that we can desire, all that we can enjoy, and vastly exceeding all that we can frame any Notion or Conception of at present. For *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive the Things which God hath prepared for them that love him, and that wait for him.* But then many Preparatory Stages of Penance and Probation must be gone through; yea, many antecedent States of inferior Happiness and Glory are to be enjoy'd, before we can arrive at this final Consummation and Bliss: Which may serve to check the Forwardness of those that think as soon as they leave this World, they are to be admitted immediately, and sit to appear in the Presence of the Great God. But alas! the Souls even of the purest and brightest of the Sons of Men must pass through several Degrees of Purification, before

fore they can arrive to an *Angelical* Clarity, or be qualified for the Enjoyment of the *Beatifick Vision*.

The Third Petition.

THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH, AS IT IS
IN HEAVEN.

This Petition, as it has Respect to the Service of *the Holy Angels in Heaven*, who as such are incapable of suffering, must be limited to an *Active* Obedience, in which only they can be Patterns to Us. This then concerns every State of the Church, and every Society of Christians; but is, in a more eminent Manner, applicable to the faithful *Thyatirians*, those first more numerous and more remarkable Labourers in God's Vineyard, who propagated the Faith which we embrace, and planted the Churches which we enjoy. These widely diffused the Light of the Gospel, enlarged the Territories of *Christ's Kingdom*, and by unwearied Diligence and Application help'd forward the Accomplishment of that Prophecy, *I will give thee the Heathen for thine Inheritance, and the uttermost Parts of the Earth for thy Possession*. By their Works of *Charity*, and *Service*, and *Faith*, and *Patience*, they converted many Nations to the Christian Faith, provided all things necessary and commodious for the Worship and Service of Almighty God, and seem in these and other Instances
more

more nearly to have resembled, and more closely to have imitated, than any other Society of Christians, the zealous, the chearful, the constant, the universal Obedience of the blessed Angels, who are *all ministring Spirits, sent forth to minister unto them who shall be Heirs of Salvation.*

The Fourth Petition.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

The antient Christians, who communicated daily, took these Words in a Sacramental Sense; and understood by *daily Bread, the Bread of Life, the Bread that came down from Heaven*; and therefore, as Dr. Mangey observes, what we improperly render *daily*, St. Jerom translated *supersubstantialem, spiritual or heavenly*. Most of the Moderns confine the Meaning of this Expression to *temporal Necessaries*. Our Church in her Catechism takes in both Senses, and understands by *our daily Bread, all things that be needful both for our Souls and Bodies*. Bread is the Staff of the *Natural Life*, and *Faith in a crucified Saviour* the Support of the *Christian*. The Church in *Sardis* had more than ordinary Occasion to pray daily for both. She was deprived, in a great measure, of its proper Nourishment, *the Word of God*; and beset on every Side with Enemies to the Purity of her Faith. The *Pope* was now in his full Power, and Lorded it over the Christian World.

World. And she was no less distress'd and destitute as to *temporal* Necessaries, always living in Danger, and often reduced to great Extremities by the continual Inroads of the Barbarous Nations, particularly of the *Turks* and *Saracens*, who, during this Period, committed vast Ravages, and made Irruptions into most Parts of *Christendom*, bringing along with them Sword, Famine, and Desolation, wheresoever they came. So very precarious was the Condition of the *Sardian* Christians, so very pressing their Occasions in both respects, and that for many Centuries together, that both their *Natural* and *Spiritual* Life seem to have been supported, as the *Israelites* were in the Wilderness, by the extraordinary Bounty of Heaven, and by a continual Interposition of Providence. *The Eyes of the Lord were upon them to deliver their Soul from Death, and to keep them alive in Famine. The Lord guided them continually, and satisfied their Soul in Drought.* Great Reason therefore have we to conclude, that in this Petition our Saviour had a more peculiar Regard to the miserable State of the *Sardian* Church, in which she is directed daily to pray for what, in a more particular manner, she daily stood in need of.

The Fifth Petition.

FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE
OUR DEBTORS.

In this Petition three great Duties are implied, viz. *Humility*, *Repentance*, and *Charity*; which make up the Character of the *Philadelphian* Christians. It is only indeed from the last that they take their Denomination; but as this presupposes the other two, so 'tis well known they were eminent Teachers and Practisers of all three. The Doctrine of these Cardinal Christian Duties was never, I believe, in any Age, more accurately stated, more fully discuss'd, or more zealously inculcated, than in the last. The great Martyr of this Period, in his immortal Book, has given us a noble Transcript of these Virtues, and is the liveliest Copy himself of a *crucified King praying for his murdering Subjects*. His passive Fortitude, and perfect Resignation to the Divine Will, his humble Opinion of himself, and low Esteem of the World, were conspicuous to All. None more unwilling to offend, or more penitent for whatever Offences or Miscarriages he had inadvertently been drawn into. None more forward to be reconciled, or more ready to forgive. In *him* we have a lively *Portraiture* of the *whole Church in Philadelphia*, which was endued more or less with the same Spirit; and which I make no Question intitled her

her to our Saviour's special Regard in this Petition, and has made her so great a Praise upon Earth.

The Sixth Petition.

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT
DELIVER US FROM EVIL.

This Petition consists of two Parts, which bear a manifest Reference to two different States or Periods; the former to the Church in *Laodicea*, and the latter to the *Antichristian* State. These two States are so far *distinct*, as that one is to follow or succeed the other; and so far *united*, as that both are implied under one State, and both included in one Petition. We pray *not to be led* into the former, and we pray to be *deliver'd* from the latter.

1. *Lead us not into Temptation.* By this we do not, at least ought not to pray for an absolute Exemption or Discharge from Temptations, which being indifferent in their own Nature, may conduce to God's Glory, and our greater Good: But rather we signify and express the Humility of our Minds, the Sense of our own Weakness, and the Diffidence we have of ourselves, lest, being *led into Temptations*, we should be worsted and overcome by them; and therefore pray that God would either *keep* us from them, or not suffer us to be *hurt* by them. This is the common and general Sense of the Words, which is proper
and

and fuitable to all Persons and at all Times; but there is another more restrained and particular, denoting some peculiar Time or *Season* of Temptation, not only with respect to *particular Persons* (who have *all*, I believe, in one Part of their Life or other, their *greater* Seasons of Trial) but chiefly with reference to the *Catholick Church*, which, by all the Accounts we have from Scripture and Antiquity, will be exposed to the greatest Dangers and Temptations in the latter Days. It is an high distinguishing Favour that *Christ* promises to the faithful *Philadelphians*, that he will *keep them from the Hour of Temptation, which shall come upon all the World, to try them that dwell upon the Earth*. This *Hour of Temptation*, as I have observ'd already, is most properly referred to the *Antichristian Persecution*: But then, as it was there farther noted, some *lesser* Evils or Trials will most probably happen in the *Laodicean* State, as preparatory to those *greater* ones in the *Antichristian*; in which will be found a more than ordinary Degree of Temptation and Trial. Had the Christians of this Age but a due Sense of the Nature of those Temptations that are soon like to try them, they would with all Ardency pray that they may not be *led* into them; or if God, for a Punishment of past Sins, for the Prevention of others, and for the Exercise and Improvement of their Virtue, shall suffer them to be *overtaken* by them, they will and must

must esteem it as the very greatest Mercy they ever received at the Hands of God, to be supported under them, and at length deliver'd out of them. On the other hand, it may be as dangerous to be *wholly free* from these Trials. For, if this be *in truth* the *Laodicean Age* (which is no Matter of Doubt with me) and if we desire to be in the Number of those *whom Christ loves*, we cannot but wish now to have our Share of this necessary Discipline: For *as many as I love*, says he, *I rebuke and chasten*. When therefore we come to serve the Lord, let us prepare our Souls for Temptation, and humbly beseech the God of Mercy that he will not bring upon us those greater and severer Trials, (in this Age of Temptation) which may very much endanger our Perseverance, and graciously support us under those, which he, in his Infinite Wisdom and Justice, shall think fit to lead us into.

2. *But deliver us from Evil*, ἀπὸ τοῦ κακοῦ, *from the Evil One*. This is not a separate Petition, but connected with the former by the Particle *BUT*. The great End we wish and pray for in this Petition is *Deliverance from the Evil One*; but we deprive ourselves, more or less, of the Benefit of this Part of the Petition, when we comply with, or suffer ourselves to be overcome by Temptations. The Meaning then of this whole Petition, as I apply it, is this—That if we yield to Temptation in the *Laodicean State*, we must expect

expect to undergo the Fury of the *Antichristian* Persecution: But those who escape the one, shall, in a great measure, be deliver'd from the other. The great Executioner of Divine Wrath is the Devil; the only way to escape the Execution of this Wrath, is to avoid or overcome his Temptations. The Words then, *Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil*, are the same as, *Suffer us not to be led into the Evil of Sin, that so thou may'st deliver us from the Evil of Punishment*. To pray absolutely for Deliverance from the latter, without any Regard to the former, is Insolence and Presumption. To pray not to be led into the former, as the only Means to avoid the latter, is our highest Duty and Interest. For it is not an *After-Repentance*, no, nor the Pardon of our Sins that will always exempt us from Punishment here: Which makes this Petition distinct from that other, *Forgive us our Trespases, &c.* In that we confess we have yielded to Temptation, and been guilty of Sin; but then we pray only for *Forgiveness*: But in this we pray for a *Deliverance from the Power and Tyranny of Satan*; not after we have sinned, but by being kept from sinning. But if we sin, we are almost sure to suffer, the one generally following the other, not always indeed immediately, but in some time of God's Visitation. Indeed the *Ungodly* and the *Impenitent* are, for the most part, reserv'd for the Punishment of the next World: But

if the *Righteous* sin, they must expect to be punish'd in *this*; though a speedy Repentance intervening will sometimes put a Stop to the Execution of God's *greater* Vengeance. But Continuance in Sin, and fresh Provocations, hasten and increase both *Personal* and *National* Judgments. God punish'd the *Israelites*, in some measure, *on the Spot*, for worshipping the Golden Calf; but reserv'd his *severer* Vengeance till they had fill'd up the Measure of their Iniquity. *In the Day that I visit*, says God, *I will visit their Sin upon them*. Had they not gone on multiplying their Transgressions of this Kind, they might have escaped God's *greater* Visitation; but their *repeated Idolatries* provoked him at last to punish them *sevenfold* for their *first* Transgression. There is then a *Time of greater Temptation*, and a *Time of peculiar Visitation*. These Two, in the End of the World, will meet together in the highest Degree; or the Space between them will be but small and inconsiderable. All Expositors seem now to agree, that by *Evil* in this Petition is meant the *Evil One*: And surely *then* we are more especially to pray for Deliverance from him, when his Power will be vastly enlarged, his Dominion almost universal, and his Reign upon Earth terribly triumphant. Our Lord therefore in the Close of his Prayer undoubtedly had respect to this last most distress'd State of his Church. All the Prophets before and after him point at the same Woful and

and Calamitous Time. The whole Burden of their Prophecies terminates in this, and in that glorious State of the Church that is to follow. It may not therefore be amiss, by way of Conclusion, to make here some very brief Observations concerning the Types and Forerunners of *Antichrist the Great*, and to offer some Reasons that may incline us to believe that the Time of his Appearing cannot be very far off.

Of the Types and Forerunners and Coming of ANTICHRIST.

THERE have been Types of this *Man of Sin* in all Ages of the World; but I shall take notice only of four the most remarkable, in the Beginning of the *Jewish* and *Christian* Church, and towards the Declension of each.

The First is *Pharaoh*, a most signal and glaring Type of *Antichrist*, both in his Sin and in his Punishment. Remarkable are the Words which God spake concerning this Monster of Hard-heartedness: *In very deed for this Cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my Power, and that my Name may be declared throughout all the Earth.* In like manner will *Antichrist* be raised up, or

suffer'd for a while to tyrannize over the Christian World, that *Christ* may at last make bare his Arm, and signalize his Power in the final Overthrow of this *Son of Perdition*, and the complete Deliverance of his faithful Servants. As *Pharaoh* had his *Magicians* to withstand *Moses* and *Aaron*, and to work *false* Miracles for the Hardening and Deception of his People; so will *Antichrist* have his *false* Prophets too, and one most eminently so, who, with *lying Wonders* and *all Deceivableness of Unrighteousness*, will cause the World to go after him, and to worship the Beast, in Opposition to and Defiance of all the Preaching and *real* Miracles of the two Witnesses. As *Pharaoh* kept the *Children of Israel* in hard Bondage, upbraided them with Idleness when ready to sink under their Burdens, and set cruel Taskmasters over them, that should require Brick without Straw, and pay them with Stripes instead of Wages; so will *Antichrist* reduce the Christians of those Times to the greatest Extremities, and mock and insult his deluded Followers in the Time of Famine (which will then rage far and near) and *if they ask Bread, will give them a Stone, or if they ask a Fish, will give them a Serpent*. Again, as the *Old Dragon*, in the Infancy of the *Jewish Church*, endeavour'd by means of *Pharaoh* to destroy all the Male-Children of the *Hebrews*, and thereby to extinguish the *Promised Seed*; so will he now attempt in the End of the World,

World, by his prime and choicest Instrument, to cut off the whole Race of Christians, and to extirpate the very Name of Christianity. Lastly, as *Pharaoh*, for his incorrigible Obstinacy and Cruelty, was punish'd with a Vengeance worthy of God, and was utterly overthrown, he and all his Host, in the *Red Sea*, while the *Israelites* were preserved by a wonderful Deliverance; so will the *Christians* in the Days of *Antichrist* escape by a like Miracle of Power and Goodness, and the whole *Antichristian* Army perish by a like fatal Overthrow.

2. As *Pharaoh* was the first great Type of *Antichrist* in the Dawnings of the *Jewish* Church, so was *Herod the Great* in the Infancy of the *Christian*. According to the general Doctrine of the ancient Fathers, *Antichrist* will rebuild the City and Temple of *Jerusalem*; and by his many lying Wonders, plausible Behaviour, and counterfeit Virtues at his first Appearance in the World, so gain the Esteem and Love of the *Jews*, as to draw them into an Opinion that he is the *very Christ*; after which they shall make and acknowledge him as their King. *Herod* repair'd, and beautified, and in a great measure rebuilt the Temple, and was held for the *Messiah* by a Party of flattering *Jews* (thence in the Gospel call'd *Herodians*) who by a perverse Interpretation of the Prophecy of *Jacob*, asserted that the Sceptre was departed from *Judah*, and translated to him. His many

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Cruelties and Barbarities are largely described by *Josephus*; and his Design to murder the Blessed Infant, whom he look'd upon as the Rival of his Hopes and Kingdom, was emphatically Diabolical and *Antichristian*. And as the *great red Dragon*, thus making use of *Herod's* jealous and bloody Temper, thought to devour the *Man-child* as soon as it was born, or to destroy *Christ* at his first Appearance in the Flesh; so will he attempt to destroy his Church before his second Appearance in Glory, by setting up *Antichrist* for his Rival, and endeavouring to establish for him an universal Dominion, and so to leave *Christ* no Subjects upon Earth to rule over.

3. In the Decline of the *Jewish* State we meet with that Monster of Tyranny and Blasphemy *Antiochus Epiphanes*; who is so exact and perfect a Type of *Antichrist*, that many of the Ancients, and likewise some Moderns, have taken him, as describ'd by the Prophet *Daniel*, for *Antichrist himself*. And indeed the fierce Persecutions he rais'd against the *Jews*, and his Profanation of the Sanctuary, are lively Emblems of that future horrid Pollution of the Temple by the *Man of Sin*, and of the wide Desolations that will be brought upon the World by that *grand Desolator*. But,

4. After all, the most eminent and complete Type of *Antichrist* that has yet appear'd in the World, is that Scourge and Scandal of the *English Nation*, *Oliver Cromwell*.

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wel. The History and Character of this prosperous Usurper tallies exactly with that both of *Antichrist* and *Antiochus*, as might be shewn in abundance of parallel Instances; but I shall mention only in general some few Things, in which these three most terrible Scourges of Mankind exactly resemble each other. 1. *War* introduced *Antiochus* and *Cromwel* upon the Stage of the World, and upon the Thrones of Princes, and will likewise their great *Antitype*. 2. Though they took Advantage of Publick Commotions, yet they chiefly obtain'd their Dominion by *Flatteries*, by a meek, peaceable, and religious Behaviour at first; and as they were, in this Respect, the most accomplish'd Hypocrites that ever were known in the World, so did they prove afterwards the greatest Tyrants and Oppressors. And this, according to Scripture and the Fathers, is exactly the Character of *Antichrist*. 3. *Cromwel* and *Antiochus* were both *Usurpers*, and so will *Antichrist*. 4. Both the former had *prodigious Successes*; one against the *Jews*, who were at that time the *Peculium* or visible Church; the other against the True Church or True Christians of his Days: And Both struck Terror into all the Princes and Potentates round about. And this shall more eminently be the Case of *Antichrist*, whose Success will be rapid and amazing. Three of the ten Kings that shall then be reigning within the Limits of the old *Roman Empire*,

he shall set upon and overcome; and the other seven being affrighted shall give up their Kingdoms and Authority to him; which makes St. *John* say of them all, that *they have one Mind, and give up their Strength and Power to the Beast.* 5. The Miseries and Devastations occasion'd by the Tyranny of *Cromwel* and *Antiochus* are some of the greatest we meet with in History, and most nearly resemble the universal Calamities that will be brought upon the World by the *Antichristian Persecutions*, which exceed all Description and Imagination. 6. 'Tis particularly noted of *Antichrist*, that he shall *take away the daily Sacrifice*; yea, there shall be little or no Christian Service perform'd publicly or solemnly in those Days, but there shall be a Famine in all the Land, *not a Famine only of Bread, nor a Thirst of Water, but of hearing the Word of the Lord: And they shall wander from Sea to Sea, and from the North even to the East; they shall run to and fro to seek the Word of the Lord, and shall not find it.* The daily Sacrifice was likewise taken from the *Jews* by *Antiochus*; and in *Cromwel's* Time the *Christian Sacrifice* was in a manner abolish'd, at least very much disused and discontinued; the loyal Clergy being driven from their Cures, and many of them forced into Prisons and Dungeons to famish and starve. And the *Puritans* seem to have had no great Notion of frequent Communion; which may be one Reason why the

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Sacrament of the Lord's-Supper is not even now so much in use among the *Dissenters*, as in *our Church*.

Secondly, as to the *Forerunners* of Antichrist, of what Sort they are, how they may be known, and when they will arise, or at what Distance from his Coming; this may, in some measure, be learn'd by distinguishing between the *Reign* or Dominion of *Antichrist*, and the *Antichristian State*. The former, according to *Daniel* and *St. John*, will last no longer than three Years and a half, the Time (or near abouts) of our Saviour's Ministry upon Earth: But the latter will begin sooner, and be of much longer Duration. For as the *Christian Æra* commenced from the *Nativity* of *Christ*, and not from his Entrance on the Ministry, or the Exercise of his prophetick Office; so the *Antichristian Æra* may be dated from the *Birth* of *Antichrist*, though his grand Appearance on the Stage of this World will not be till towards the latter End of his Days. And as there was something of solemn *Apparatus* in the Natural and Moral World before the *first* Coming of *Christ*, viz. an universal Peace over the *Roman Empire*, and a general Expectation among *Jews* and *Gentiles* of some great Prince to be born about that Time, who is therefore stiled by the Prophet *the Desire of all Nations*; so, on the contrary, Wars and Commotions will precede the Coming of the *last* great Enemy of the Church, who

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who may justly be call'd *the Dread of all Nations, and of all Ages*, since the Beginning of Christianity to this Time: And though his Coming will be *least dreaded and least expected* by an unbelieving World, when 'tis *nearest at hand*, yet previous Warnings and Notices will be given to the Faithful from time to time of his nearer and nearer Approach. And then, *lastly*, as our Blessed Saviour had his Forerunner *John the Baptist*, to usher in his Person and Doctrine, to dispose Men's Minds more immediately for his Reception, and to prepare the Way before him; so *Antichrist* likewise will have his *Harbingers and Forerunners*, to poison the Minds of Christians with pestilent Doctrines and pernicious Errors, and to prepare the World, by Degrees, for receiving and entertaining this *Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition*; whose Coming will be *after the Working of Satan, with all Power and Signs, and lying Wonders*. Whether any such *Forerunners* have yet appeared, is a Question perhaps but too easy to be resolv'd.

Thirdly, among the many Reasons that may induce us to believe that the Coming of Antichrist cannot be *very far off*, these three following, among others that might be mention'd, justly demand our most serious Consideration. 1. *St. Paul* plainly affirms, that the *Man of Sin* cannot be revealed, *except* there come a *falling away first*, or a great Apostasy among Christians. How far this
is

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is come to pass, I need not say: 'Tis too visible to be denied, or dissembled; and cannot but give every serious Christian melancholy Apprehensions of a speedy Revelation of that lawless Tyrant. 2. Wars and great Commotions in Christendom are to precede and usher in this Monster of Iniquity into the World. *Ye shall hear of Wars, and Rumours of Wars; be not ye troubled, says our Saviour, for these are only the Beginnings of Sorrow.* 3. Another Reason to shew the Probability of the near Approach of *Antichrist*, is the common way now-a-days of *ridiculing* this Notion. The Devil, whose Devices we should not be ignorant of, commonly tempts Men to more than ordinary Disbelief of what is just ready to come to pass. He began with setting his Agents at work to decry all Prophecies in general, and to shew something of Inconsistency between the Predictions of the Old Testament, and their Completion in the New. And now no Notion is more contemptible or more ridiculed among profane Wits, than the *Coming of Antichrist*, which is used by them as a sort of Proverbial Expression to signify *what will never come to pass.* The God of this World, who always *blinds the Eyes of them that believe not*, will take particular Care to shut them against the Time of *Antichrist's* Appearing; that so, *while Men sleep*, he may sow and raise his Tares. We read in Scripture of the Inhabitants of *Laiish*, that *when they dwelt careless, and after the Man-*
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ner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure, the Children of Dan (the original Stock of the Antichristian Offspring) came upon them in the Depth of their Security, burnt down their City, and put them all to the Sword. *Antichrist* will alike surprize and come upon the World in the midst of their Indolence and Infidelity; and when the Wicked and Profane are drolling upon the Sacred Prophecies, they will then receive an unlook'd-for Demonstration, and be convinc'd by Sense and Confusion. So that *that very reigning Infidelity*, which denies and makes a Mock of this momentous Truth, is no small Evidence to serious and considerate Persons of its near Accomplishment. But whether we regard it or not, whether we be provided or not, that *Man of Sin* will be revealed in his Time, and that Time is ripening apace.

Arise then, O God, plead thine own Cause: Remember how the foolish Man reproacheth thee daily. Forget not the Voice of thine Enemies: The Tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually. Send thy Fear upon all the Nations and People that seek not after thee: Stablish all those that stand in Grace and Truth, and bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred and are deceived. Send forth more Labourers into thy Vineyard, and raise up Prophets to unfold the Mysteries of thy Word and Providence, and the wonderful Things thou art now doing and about to do for thine Elect. Prepare thy Church for her

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her last great Conflict, that being thoroughly purged and purified thereby, she may be made ready for the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb. Shorten the Time, and hasten thy Kingdom. Hide thy Faithful ones under the Shadow of thy Wings, until the Indignation be over-past. Save us from the Lion's Mouth, from his dangerous Delusions, and tyrannous Oppression. Keep us from all Evil, from the Evil of Sin, and from the Evil of Punishment, from the Evil One, and from the Evil World, and from whatever is displeasing in thy Sight, and destructive to our own Souls. FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN;

S. D. G.



23

THE
MYSTICAL IMPORT
OF THE
Number *SEVEN*,
As used in the
Sacred Writings.

THE
MYSTICAL IMPORT

OF THE
BRITISH MUSEUM
Numbered
As in the

Sacred Writings.

THE
MYSTICAL IMPORT
OF THE
Number SEVEN, &c.

THE Christian State being divided into seven distinct Churches, succeeding one another at different Periods, and These the peculiar Objects of our Saviour's Care and Inspection, as being the Purchase of his Blood; we may well suppose that both before and after his Incarnation, he had a special Eye to these several Parts of his mystical Body; and there are several Passages in Scripture, where the Number *Seven* may be found to bear some Allusion or Reference to these Parts. Through the whole Book of *Revelation* this Number is constantly made use of, and repeated seven Times, as 1. The seven Stars; 2. The seven Golden Candlesticks, or the seven Churches; 3. The seven Spirits before the Throne, or the seven Angels that stood before God, represented likewise by the seven Horns, and seven Eyes of

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the Lamb; 4. The seven Seals; 5. The seven Trumpets; 6. The seven Thunders; and 7. The seven Vials. There are several other Places, where the Number *Seven* is mention'd, that may be interpreted with reference to the seven Churches. Let me here, in the first place, take notice of one difficult and obscure Text in particular, that will appear very clear and intelligible when applied this way. It is this——*Wisdom hath built her an House, and hath hewn her out seven Pillars.* Expositors are at a loss to explain what is meant by *seven Pillars*. But if we understand by *Wisdom* a Divine Person, (as 'tis manifestly to be taken in the foregoing Chapter) even the *Logos* or God the Word, then her Building a House signifies *Christ's* founding a Church that should be called by his own Name, and fitly denoted here by *the House of Wisdom*; and the *seven Pillars* are the several successive Portions of his Church, united in Faith, but distinct in Character and Time, and supported by different *Pillars* or Pastors. And as This is a beautiful Figure and lively Emblem of the seven Churches in *Asia*, so does it seem to have been plainly intended by the Holy Ghost as a short Prophetick Description of the same. And in this Sense the Words of *Solomon* are clear and determinate.

I might mention likewise on this Occasion, the seven Precepts of *Noah*, as deriv'd down to us by Tradition, which may be found

found to have some faint Resemblance to the State of the seven Churches. I might take notice also of the seven Years of Famine in the Land of *Egypt*, succeeding seven Years of Plenty, as pointing at some dark and doleful Season, some dreadful Famine of the Word that will ensue, after the Church of *Christ* has pass'd her seven Stages or Periods appointed her of God; when however God may provide something like the Land of *Goshen* for the Faithful, as he did then for the *Israelites*, beside the Provision already laid up in the Church from the Plenty abounding in former and latter Times. I might farther observe somewhat of a Typical Representation of the seven Churches, in the *Israelites* compassing the Walls of *Jericho* seven Days, and seven Times the last Day, with seven Priests going before them, and blowing with seven Trumpets of Ram's-Horns; which is no improper Emblem or Intimation of the strait Confinement of the Infernal Powers, by means of the Services of the Church and its Ministers, during the several Periods of Christianity, and their utter Extinction or Extirpation in the last, that is, in the succeeding *Antichristian* State, by the sudden and total Overthrow of *Antichrist* and his Adherents. It deserves likewise to be consider'd, that the great Feasts of the *Jews* are directed and completed by the Number *Seven*. Seven Days are required for their Celebration of the Passover: Seven Days they

were to keep the Feast of Tabernacles: And the Feast of Pentecost is call'd the *Feast of Weeks*, as being seven Weeks from the Pass-over, or from their first Reaping of Corn. But not to insist or enlarge on these or the like Instances in the Old Testament, I chuse rather to offer a few Hints in relation to some remarkable Events in the New. But first I would observe in general, that God, before the World was made, foreseeing the Fall, and designing the Redemption of Man, may reasonably be suppos'd, at the Time of Creation, or in the Contrivance and Formation of Things, to have had a special Eye and Regard to that future Renovation: So that those Things, which appear to us to come to pass only according to the invariable Laws, or stated Course of Nature, might be predetermined by an All-wise God (*known unto whom are all his Works from the Beginning of the World*) as monitory Signs, Emblems, and Figures of some Changes, Revolutions, and Transactions in the Moral World. And if the Works of Creation may be subservient to such Designs, or made to carry some *mystical* Meaning in them, much more may the Works of Providence, which are free and unrestrain'd. This being observ'd, I shall desire the Reader, in the

First place, to consider the Commencement, Institution, and Design of the *Christian Sabbath*; which is said in Scripture to be the first Day of the Week: But as the
Weekly

Weekly Period, or the Revolution of seven Days, is not *natural*, but *arbitrary*, the first Christian Sabbath, or the Day of our Lord's Resurrection, may be called the *Eighth* as well as the *First* Day, that is, the Day after the seventh. Now this Change of the Day from the seventh to the eighth, may intimate thus much—That as the *Jewish* Week look'd back, and had Respect to the six Days Work of the Creation, and to God's Resting from his Works on the *seventh* Day; so the *Christian* Week look'd forward to the seven Ages of the Church of *Christ*, and to that Sabbath in the eighth Age, or to the *Rest that remaineth to the People of God*, after the Fall and Destruction of *Antichrist*.

Secondly, The Case of *Mary Magdalen*, out of whom our Saviour cast *seven Devils*, might be intended as a *mystical* Representation of the Christian Church in her sevenfold Penitential State. For, in truth, the Church is no other for the main, than a *Congregation of Penitents*, acknowledging and bewailing their Offences, and suing for Mercy, Pardon, and Grace; before which, they are under the Dominion, and in the Possession of the Devil and his Angels.

Thirdly, The Election of the *seven Deacons* carries something of an Aspect the same way; some of their Transactions, and the Name of each individual Person, pointing at some peculiar and distinguishing Character in the Christian Church. The Proto-Martyr is

a strong and lively Figure of the Primitive or *Ephesine* Church, in every Part of his Character, Deportment, and Sufferings. But leaving my Reader to form the Comparison himself, I shall only observe, that nothing can be said, in few Words, more expressive of the inward and spiritual State of the first Christians, than that which is said of St. *Stephen*, that *he was a Man full of Faith, and of the Holy Ghost*; whose violent, but exemplary Death, was both a Pledge and Pattern of what befel that noble Army of Martyrs that follow'd him, and whose very Name pointed at the glorious Reward reserv'd for those worthy Champions in the Cause of *Christ*. *Philip*, the second in Order, and whose Preaching, Services, and Success in the Christian Cause, are more particularly recorded, may be consider'd, in some respect, as the Representative of the Church in *Smyrna*. For tho' we read nothing of his Sufferings, yet 'tis sufficient, if we can discover some few Lines of Similitude between them. And one very plain and distinguishing one is, his Instructing and Baptizing, by God's express Command, *an Eunuch of great Authority under Candace Queen of the Æthiopians*; which may appear to be somewhat parallel to the Case of *Constantine the Great* receiving his Instructions and Baptism from the Christian Bishops of those Times. For though immediately after his Conversion, the *Pergamean* State of the Church may be supposed to commence;
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yet it was the Bishops and Pastors of the Church in *Smyrna* (who had just come out of the fiery Furnace) that farther explain'd to him the Vision he had seen in the Heavens, and that were Instruments of converting him to the Christian Faith. And his Vision of the Sign of the Cross, in a Pillar of Fire and in the open Air, answers very nearly to that Circumstance of the *Eunuch's* sitting in his Chariot, and reading the Prophet *Isaiah*, particularly that remarkable Prophecy of the Sufferings of the *Messiah* in the fifty-third Chapter, and more especially those Words — *He is brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep before his Shearers is dumb, so he opened not his Mouth, &c.* Something likewise is to be learnt from his Name *Philip*, which denotes, in this Case, this Evangelist's Love and Respect to Great Men, (who have the Command of *Horses* and Chariots) and his performing the kindest Office to one of them. And the like kind Offices in the Christian Bishops towards *Constantine*, were the first happy Means of introducing the visible regal State of the Church; when she, that was before *all-glorious within*, had her filthy Garments taken away, and began to be deck'd with outward Splendor and Ornaments. We have no Account in Scripture of the other five Deacons, beside their Names: But from these alone we may trace the Footsteps of the five succeeding Churches. *Prochorus* leads the Way in Singing and Dancing, in Exul-

tation and Joy, as his Name imports. And this was the true State of the Church in *Pergamus*, which was a State of Eminency, Dignity, and Prosperity. *Nicanor* signifies a Man of Victory, or *Domitor Virorum*; which Character, how applicable to the Church in *Thyatira*, which was eminent for its Zeal in spreading and propagating Christianity far and near, and in its Success in subduing such Multitudes of *Heathens* to the Obedience and Faith of *Christ*, may be seen from the Explanation already given in relation to that Church. 5. *Timon*, i. e. *Honorans*, which Name points at the vast Powers, Privileges, and Honours, conferr'd upon the Church by Christian Emperors, Princes, and other Great Men in the *Sardian* State; which, though afterwards abused to Superstition, were at first piously design'd, and really conducive to the Honour of God and Religion, and serv'd to fulfil in part that Prophecy of *Isaiah*—*The Abundance of the Sea shall be converted unto thee, the Forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.—They shall bring Gold and Incense, and they shall shew forth the Praises of the Lord.—They shall come with Acceptance upon mine Altar, and I will glorify the House of my Glory.—Surely the Isles shall wait for me—to bring their Sons from far, their Silver and Gold with them, unto the Name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee.* 6. *Parmenas* denotes firm and constant, the Character of the *Philadelphia*

ladelphian Church, or of the several Reform'd Churches, taken collectively, but especially of the Church of *England*, which was always esteem'd, and is commonly call'd, the *Bulwark* of the Reformation: And as a suitable Reward for its Firmness and Constancy, *Christ* promises in his Epistles to make every faithful Member of this Church a *Pillar* in the Temple of his God, and in the *New Jerusalem*. 7. *Nicolas*, a Profelyte of *Antioch*, which Name signifies both *Victor Populi*, and *Populus Victor*; as *Antipas* stands for a Person who is, in a manner, against every one, and whom every one is against. And this represents the seventh Church, implied in the Name *Laodicea*. I need not be more particular: It may suffice to have shewn in the Names of the seven Deacons, and in the Characters and Ministrations of the two first, some Lines and Traces of the seven Churches; such as may induce us to believe, that the appointing such a select Number, and the Choice of such Names in the Order too in which they are set down by *St. Luke*, could not have happen'd without some special Designation, and none more likely than that which I am now considering. And if we look back to our Saviour's chusing his twelve Apostles, we shall there discover some further Glimmerings of Light in this Matter. Their Number indeed, if taken together, would be an insuperable Obstacle to any such Supposition: But *seven* of that Number may be consider'd as some, what

what separate and distinct from the rest, as being more strictly join'd in the natural Bond of Brotherly Union, as thus—*Andrew* and *Simon Peter*, Brethren; *James* and *John*, Brethren, and near Kinsmen to our Lord; *James the Less*, *Simon* and *Jude*, Brethren, and the Brothers of our Lord. The Account we have of some of these Apostles is so short and imperfect, that no complete Judgment can be form'd in this Case: But yet, as in old Medals, Coins, and Pictures, that have been greatly defaced by Time, so much of the Lines, Features, and Inscription is sometimes remaining, as serves to shew what they were design'd to represent; so there are still discernible in the short Account of the Lives of the Apostles that has been transmitted to us, some such plain Strokes and Lineaments, as will enable us, in some measure, to discover what particular Age or State of the Church each of them was intended to typify and prefigure. The three last claim the *Precedence*, as Brothers of our Lord; and accordingly we find that St. *James the Less*, on that account, (as is generally supposed) and as the eldest of the Three, was constituted the First Bishop of *Jerusalem*; and his particular and amiable Character (having been all along distinguish'd for his *Justice* and *Piety*) together with the Manner and Circumstances of his Death, exactly answer and very properly represent the general Case and Character of the Primitive Christians, or of the Church
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in *Ephesus*. And what was wanting in this Head of the Apostles, may be found abundantly supplied in the Proto-Martyr: And the Character of both together will help to convey to our Minds a lively Image of the Primitive Church. 2. St. *Simon*, of whom we have a very brief and slender Account, fitly represents that short Period of the Church denoted by *Smyrna*: As the Sirname of *Canaanite*, affix'd to this Apostle, signifies *Zeal*, and is generally allow'd to be designedly so interpreted by St. *Luke*, who substitutes in the room of That the Title of *Zealot*; by which is Typically denoted the fervent Zeal and inflam'd Affections of the *Smyranean* Christians, those great Sufferers under the *Dioclesian* Persecution. 3. St. *Jude*, the Third Brother of our Lord, represents the Third Church in Order of Time. His Name signifies *Praise*, the proper Mark of a Church that was become victorious and triumphant over its Enemies, and alluding also to the Royal Tribe of *Judah*, from which this Apostle likewise must be descended: And the two Surnames given to him, viz. *Lebbaeus* and *Thaddaeus*, import Wisdom and Magnanimity, the peculiar Characteristicks of the *Pergamean* State: And according to the general Account, this Apostle, after he had finish'd his Travels, settled at *Edeffa*, and there died a natural and peaceable Death; a significant Foretoken this, of the peaceable and prosperous State of that Church, of which he was a Type, after it had

had escaped from the Furnace of Persecution, 4. *St. Peter*, whose Zeal and Activity in Preaching and Propagating the Faith of *Christ*, and wonderful Success in gaining such Multitudes of Converts to Christianity as is recorded in Scripture, might be intended more particularly to prefigure the faithful and zealous *Thyatirians*, those unwearied and successful Labourers in propagating the Gospel to distant Parts. And 'tis observable, that it was towards the End of the *Thyatirian* State, that the Bishops of *Rome* began to assert and claim a Right of being *St. Peter's* Successors in that See; looking upon him as the Head of the Apostles, and themselves as entitled to a Supremacy over all other Bishops and Pastors, in Right and Virtue of such Succession; whereas, in truth, he was only the *Fourth* in Order, and took his Place after the Brethren of our Lord. This fatal Error seems to have arisen from the laying too great a Stress upon the Placing of the Apostles, according to the Catalogues given of them in Scripture, in which *St. Peter* is always named First. But That plainly respects only the Order of Time in which they were call'd to the *Apostolate*; as may appear from these two Reasons. 1. That *St. James the Less*, who was undoubtedly the First in Order of Dignity, is placed one of the Last, or generally stands as the Ninth in the Number of the Twelve. 2. That the three Passages in the Gospels, where all the Apostles
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are mention'd, *Philip* and *Bartholomew* are always placed together, and *Philip* always before *Bartholomew*, according to the Time of their being call'd by *Christ*, agreeably to the Account we have in the First of *St. John*; and as we have no particular Account of the Call of Five of them, we may reasonably conclude from the Placing of the other Seven, whose Call is expressly and distinctly taken notice of, that these likewise are placed according to the different Times of their being called. Whether *Peter* was call'd or chosen before *Andrew*, (I mean to the *Apostleship*, not to the *Discipleship*; since as to the latter, 'tis undisputed that *Andrew* was the first call'd) or *James* before *John*, 'tis not easy or material to determine. They are mention'd together, as Brethren, and as call'd at one and the same Time, or very soon after one another. Only *Peter* is mention'd before *Andrew*, as being generally supposed to be the Elder Brother: And for the same Reason *James* is placed before *John*. But this by the way. 5. *St. Andrew* may be consider'd as the Apostolick Representative of the Church in *Sardis*. His Name speaks his Courage and Fortitude, and manly Deportment, or that he would quit himself like a Man: And he fully answer'd his Name; not one of the Apostles underwent a more lingering and painful Death than he did, or with greater Courage, Constancy, and Chearfulness. After he had been cruelly scourged by
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seven *Lictors*, he was fasten'd to a Cross, not with Nails, but with Cords, to make his Death more tedious and tormenting; in which Posture he continued for two Days together, with invincible Patience, teaching and exhorting the People all that time: A sad, but lively Precedent of those terrible and tedious Persecutions that were brought upon the *Sardinian* Christians, particularly the *Waldenses* and *Albigenses*, by the Church of *Rome*; the former of which underwent Variety of Tortures and sundry Kinds of Death for above four hundred and fifty Years; and yet all that while did not cease to teach and to preach *Jesus Christ*, as they had Opportunity, according to the Doctrine they profess'd. And as *St. Andrew's* Attempt to convert *Ægeas* the Proconsul of *Achaia* was not only scornfully rejected and derided, but turn'd upon him by the Proconsul, who used all his Endeavours to persuade the Apostle to worship and do sacrifice to his Gods, and at last threaten'd him with a cruel Death if he refused; so those ancient Protestants were so far from being suffer'd or allow'd (if known) to make any Converts, to publish their Confessions of Faith, or to propagate their Doctrine, that all Endeavours were used to bring them to submit to the *Popish* Tenets and Practices, and the severest Punishments inflicted on them for their resolute Non-compliance.

6. *St. James the Great* was the first Martyr; and the shortest Liver of all the Apostles, being

ing put to Death in the eleventh Year after our Lord's Ascension, which was one Year before the Apostles are said in general to have dispersed themselves; and that may be the Reason why we hear nothing authentick of his Travels beyond *Judaea*. But what was wanting in his Days, was made up in the long Life of his Brother. His Name in *Greek* being the same as *Jacob*, we must look for the Meaning of it in the Patriarch of that Name; of whom his Brother observ'd, that *he is rightly called Jacob, for he hath supplanted me these two times: He took away my Blessing, and now he hath taken away my Birth-right*: Which was symbolically represented at the Time of his Birth, when he took hold with his Hand of the Heel of *E-sau*. Now the State of Christianity, which I suppose to be foreshewn and presignified in the Name and Character of this Apostle, was the blessed Reformation; the short, but surprising Progress of which in this Nation, was suddenly cut off, like *St. James*, by the *Marian* Persecution; but soon after reviv'd again. And the pious Reformers then, and the sound Members of that Church ever since, are to be esteem'd as the *true Israel of God*; the first as supplanting the old *Roman* Church, that, like *E-sau*, was *all over red* with the Blood of the Saints and Martyrs; and the latter, or both the one and the other, as treading in the Steps of their Apostolical and Patriarchal Forefathers *James* and *Jacob*,
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and shewing in their Lives and Conversations somewhat of the like Courage, Piety, and Simplicity. 7. *St. John*, as the last and longest Liver of the Apostles, is a fit Representative of the Church in *Laodicea*, if not design'd likewise to represent some Part of the Church in *Philadelphia*, as supplying by the Length of his own Life what was cut off from the Days of his Brother *St. James*. Certain it is, that his predominant Temper and distinguishing Character, which was *Love*; answers exactly to the Title of *Philadelphia*, given to the sixth Church. But how he can typify or represent the degenerate Church in *Laodicea*, may be thought a Matter of some Doubt and Difficulty. But this will presently vanish, if we consider him as no farther a Representative in this Case, than either as he was the last of the Sacred College, and outliv'd the rest of the Apostles, and confirm'd by his own Authority what had been written and transacted by them; or else as subject at last to the natural Languor and Inactivity of old Age; though even as to his remarkable Affection for his Saviour and for the Brethren, 'tis no unlikely Intimation, that even in the degenerate *Laodicean* State, no small Number would be found of somewhat of the like happy Temper and Disposition with that blessed Apostle.

These few Hints may afford some little Light to those that are curious in these Matters, and willing to be satisfied in a Point
of

of ſuch great Importance: If it be enquir'd, why theſe ſeven Apoſtles ſhould be made choice of before the reſt as Types and Figures of the ſeven Churches, I anſwer, that beſide their particular correſponding Characters, Theſe were choſen by *Chriſt*, not ſingly and ſeparately, as the other five, but jointly as Brethren, and ſo were fitter to repreſent thoſe Churches, which will be found likewise to bear a very near Relation to one another, in Time, Character, or outward Condition. The two firſt Churches, as to the Circumſtance of Time and their State of Suffering, were almoſt the ſame; and the latter is diſtinguiſhable from the former only by a greater Degree of Suffering. Some of the Sufferers and Confefſors in the *Smyranean* State made a Part of the Church in *Pergamus* at the Beginning. And that Church, as coming out of great Tribulation, being remarkably dignified and glorified, pictures out to us *Chriſt's* Regal State, as the two preceding do his State of Humiliation: And theſe three are moſt ſuitably typified by the three Brethren of our Lord, both they and the Churches they repreſent, ſetting forth the Difference of his Condition, before, at, and after his Crucifixion. *Ephesus* ſhews and diſplays him in his Life, or during the Courſe of his Miniſtry; *Smyrna* in his Death and Paſſion, and *Pergamus* at his Reſurrection, Aſcenſion, and Exaltation. The two ſucceeding Churches in *Thyatira* and *Sardis* (in

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the History of which we meet with the Rise, Progress, and Consummation of *Popery*) are likewise nearly related; and the last stands distinguish'd from the first, only by a greater Defection from the Christian Faith and Practice. And the two last Churches are related and distinguish'd in much the same Manner: And many of those who were Members of the Church in *Philadelphia*, are now Members of that in *Laodicea*. If it be farther ask'd, why the other five Apostles were excluded; and if not, what Parts of the Church they may be supposed to represent? To this I answer, that these five are very proper Representatives of the *Jewish* Church, as the seven preceding are of the *Christian*, and that from the Beginning to the End of it, that is, from the Call of *Abraham* to the Destruction of *Jerusalem*; which may be divided into five distinct Periods, as thus—1. From *Abraham* to *Moses*; 2. From *Moses* to *David*; 3. From *David* to the *Babylonish* Captivity; 4. From the *Babylonish* Captivity to the Birth of *Christ*; 5. From the Birth of *Christ* to the Destruction of *Jerusalem* and the *Jewish* Polity. Now if we consider the five remaining Apostles, not altogether according to the Order in which they are placed in the New Testament, but according to their Names and Characters, as suiting and corresponding with the respective States or Periods of the *Jewish* Church, they will be found to stand thus

thus — 1. *Bartholomew*, 2. *Matthew*, 3. *Philip*, 4. *Thomas*, 5. *Judas Iscariot*.

First, The Character of *St. Bartholomew* (who is also call'd *Nathaniel* by *St. John*) according to what our Saviour said of him, *Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no Guile*, suits very well with *Abraham* and his Posterity, so long as they continued faithful and obedient, or to the Time of their going out of *Egypt*. The Readiness and Eminency of his Faith does likewise nearly resemble that of those renowned Patriarchs, which is so celebrated by the Sacred Writers. Upon hearing our Saviour only declare, that before *Philip* call'd him he saw him under the Fig-tree, he presently laid aside the Prejudice he had conceiv'd against him, as to the Place of his Abode, and made this free and noble Confession — *Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel*; upon which our Lord promised to reward his ready Faith hereafter with a fuller Demonstration of his Divinity, agreeably to the Vision vouchsafed the Patriarch *Jacob*; of which great Original this holy Apostle was so bright and lively a Transcript.

Secondly, *St. Matthew's* leaving a gainful Employment to follow *Christ*, may be liken'd to *Moses* and the *Israelites* quitting *Egypt* to retire into the Wilderness. The former, when called by God, refused any longer to be call'd the Son of *Pharaoh's* Daughter, tho' saved, nourish'd, and educated by her. And

the Publican, when called by *Christ*, refused any longer to serve the *Roman* Government, though sustain'd and enrich'd by it. Both were eminent Writers, and both wrote in *Hebrew*: The one the first Writer of the Old Testament, the other of the New. From the former we have the History of the Creation, from the latter the Account of our Redemption. And the Call of this Apostle from that dangerous Office he was employ'd in, was as great and remarkable a Deliverance, as *Moses's* being taken alive out of the Water.

Thirdly, The Name and Character of *St. Philip* has respect to the *Regal* State of the *Jewish* Church. His Name (as I have observ'd already in relation to *Philip* the Deacon) imports a Love and Regard for Persons in high Station: And we know how fond the Children of *Israel* were of Kingly Government. *St. Philip* likewise appears to have been a Person of some Note and Eminency among the Apostles, and to have had an Interest and Acquaintance with Foreigners, since some *Greeks* applied to him in particular, that they might see *Jesus*: Which may serve as some little Shadow of foreign Princes and other great Men, during this Period, courting the Favour and Interest of the Kings of *Judah* and *Israel*, desiring to be instructed in, and becoming some of them Profelytes to, the *Jewish* Religion. And even the Apostasy and Idolatry of the *Israelites*, from the
Reign

Reign of *Solomon* to the Time of the Captivity, is not obscurely intimated in that strange Request which this Apostle made to our Saviour, and our Saviour's Answer thereunto—*Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us*: Which gross Conception of the Divine Nature, and fond Desire of some visible Representation of the Deity, may be observ'd to have been one great Cause or Inlet of all Idolatry. For *God is a Spirit*, and manifests himself to us in this Life only by his Works and in his Son, as our Saviour shews in his Answer to *Philip*—*Jesus saith unto him, Hast thou been so long time with me, and hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?—Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very Works sake.* St. Philip's Request therefore to see the Father, or desiring ocular Demonstration for his Satisfaction in that Point, was not unlike the *Israelites* crying unto *Aaron*, *Up, make us Gods that shall go before us.* Which stupid and impious Conceit of theirs led them by Degrees into all manner of Idolatry.

Fourthly, St. *Thomas* is set forth to us under a Threefold Character: 1. As a Man of Zeal and Courage; 2. As one dull of Apprehension and slow of Belief; and, 3. As firm and constant after he was fully convinced. The first appears from his Resolution to go and die with his Lord, if he ventur'd again into

Judaea, where the *Jews* had lately sought to stone him. And this agrees with the general Temper of the *Jews*, after their Return from the *Babylonish* Captivity, and especially about the Time of the *Maccabees*, who made so brave a Stand in Defence of their Religion and Country. And the Diffidence, Incredulity, and Obstinacy of this Apostle, in the Point of *Christ's* Resurrection, meets with too near a Parallel in the strange Stupidity, Prejudice, and Perverseness of the *Jews*, just before and at the Time of our Saviour's Birth. For though there was then a sort of general Expectation of the Coming of the *Messiah*, there was likewise at the same time almost as general an Indifference and Unconcernedness about that most important Event. That there was such a general Opinion at that Time, even among the common People, among Persons of mean Condition and ill Character, as well as among the Learned and Devout, with *Samaritans* as well as *Jews*, may be partly inferr'd from what the Woman of *Samaria* told our Saviour — *I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.* But, as far as appears, this common Opinion did not lead the more knowing and skilful among the *Jews*, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, and Doctors of the Law, (as it naturally tended to do) to consult and consider more closely the Writings of the Prophets, or to examine more critically and exactly the Time
of

of the Expiration of *Daniel's* Seventy Weeks. Yea, after this great Event was actually come to pass, after they had been sufficiently appriz'd of the Birth of the *Messiah*, both from the Report of the Shepherds, and by the Coming of the Wise-Men from the East, who inform'd them of the Notice they had of this by the Appearance of an extraordinary Star, and of the End and Design of their taking so long a Journey; nay, after they themselves had determin'd, according to the Prophets, that *Bethlehem* was the Place of his Nativity, and which lay so near to *Jerusalem*: After all this, I say, we don't find that any of them went to the Place to see this new-born King, or made any farther Enquiry into the Truth of this Matter; which strange unaccountable Negligence and Stupidity, in a Matter of such near Concern and infinite Importance, was one great Cause (and that both naturally and judicially) of their inveterate Prejudice and Opposition to our Saviour afterwards, as it provok'd God to give them up, in some measure, from this time, to Blindness and Hardness of Heart. 'Tis true, many of them at last were convinced by the Miracles which *Christ* wrought; and this answers to the last Part of *St. Thomas's* Character, when after a full Demonstration and Conviction, he chearfully confess'd the Truth of our Lord's Resurrection, and the Divinity of his Person, in these few, but emphatical Words, *My Lord, and my God!*

5. *Judas Iscariot* stands as a rueful Emblem of that terrible Catastrophe, which awaited the reprobate *Jews* after their rejecting, betraying, apprehending and crucifying the Lord of Life and Glory. Covetousness and Hypocrisy make up the Character of that perfidious Apostle, before he actually committed the great Crime: And these are the most distinguishable Characters, throughout the Gospel, of the *Jews* of that Age. The last was a Cloak to the first; and both together led them on, by Degrees, to the Commission of such enormous and unparallel'd Wickedness, as provok'd God not only to give them up into the Hands of those Enemies, for fear of whom they had disown'd their *Messiah*; but likewise to such Blindness, Infatuation, and incurable Obstinacy, as made them become, like the Traitor, their own Executioners: For the Vengeance that they suffer'd, was what they forcibly pull'd down upon their own Heads. Deaf to all Intreaties and Persuasions, to all Offers and Tenders of Peace, they ran headlong into open and certain Ruin, murder'd and destroy'd one another, did all they could to provoke the *Roman* General and Army, and sharpen'd all the Instruments of War, and the Weapons of Divine Indignation against themselves. For at the same time they were visited by God with a most dreadful Famine; and such vast Multitudes perish'd thereby, that we may truly say of this most wicked City, that
had

had now fill'd up the Measure of her Iniquity, what is related of *Judas Iscariot*, that she *burst in the midst*, and *all her Bowels gusſed out*. *Titus* going about the Walls, and ſeeing the Ditch within fill'd with dead Bodies, could not forbear commiſerating and bewailing their moſt deplorable Condition, and with Hands liſted up to Heaven call'd God to witneſs, that *it was not his Doing*. And indeed it deſerves to be noted, that the Inſtrument made choice of by God for executing the Fierceneſs of his Anger, and pouring out the full Vials of his Wrath upon a People that had ſo barbarouſly treated the meekeſt, the moſt merciful, and the moſt innocent Perſon that ever liv'd upon Earth, was a Prince of a mild and merciful Diſpoſition himſelf, and eſteem'd and call'd the *Delight of Mankind*. But as *Judas* the Traitor was thus the ſad Figure and Forerunner of the unbelieving and obſtinate *Jews*, that ſo miſerably periſh'd in the Day of Vengeance; ſo the faithful *Matthias*, who was choſen into his Room, is a fit Representative of that great Number of repenting and believing *Jews*, that were converted through the Labours and Preaching of the Apoſtles.

But beſide the ſelect Number of Twelve, called and choſen immediately by *Chriſt* himſelf, there were two Extraordinary Apoſtles, ſet apart for the ſame Work by the expreſs Designation and Appointment of the Holy Ghoſt; namely, *Paul* and *Barnabas*, who
were

were not only great Blessings to the Age they liv'd in, but seem intended likewise as Pledges and Earnests of some extraordinary Light and Benefit that will accrue to the Church in the Ages yet to come, or in the last Days. 1. *St. Barnabas* is, by Interpretation, according to *St. Luke*, a *Son of Consolation*. And when is ghostly Comfort more seasonable, than in Times of Apostasy and Persecution? When may Christians more reasonably hope and expect a larger Measure of Grace and Consolation, than when they are call'd to a greater Degree of Suffering; God usually dispensing and suiting his Succours of Grace according to the present State of his Church, and the different Exigencies of Times and Persons? This Apostle was endued with many singular Gifts. *He was a good Man*, says *St. Luke*, *and full of the Holy Ghost, and of Faith*: A happy Presage, that the faithful Christians in the latter Days will not be left destitute of God's manifold Gifts, nor yet of Grace to use them always to his Honour and Glory. 2. *St. Paul*, whose Name, like *St. Stephen's*, denotes a *Crown*, and who so earnestly contended for the Immortal Crown, and was so fully assured of it at last, and whose Labours and Sufferings for the Gospel were so remarkably great, does very fitly represent in general the last great Conflict of the Church in the Days of *Antichrist*, and more particularly some eminent Persons that God will then raise up for the Defence
and

and Propagation of the Faith. The Disagreement and Separation that happen'd between these two great and intimate Apostles, does likewise suggest to us, and serve to foreshew those Tares of Discord and Dissension, which the Devil will find Means to sow, in the great Day of Probation, between even pious and orthodox Christians; which God however, we may humbly hope, by his wise Providence, will graciously over-rule, as he did in the former Case, and turn to the greater Benefit and Advantage of his Church.

Now to God only-wise be Glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.



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APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

Some farther OBSERVATIONS on the
Mystical Import of the Number SEVEN.

WHEN St. Peter ask'd our Lord, *How often shall my Brother trespass against me and I forgive him, till seven times? Jesus said unto him, I say not unto thee till seven times, but till seventy times seven.* In which Number he seems plainly to allude to the *seventy Weeks* made known to the Prophet *Daniel*, That being likewise seventy times seven. And as those prophetical Weeks contain in the whole four hundred and ninety Years, so 'tis very remarkable that there were *four times four hundred and ninety Years* from the Call of *Abraham* to the Coming of *Christ*: And each of these commenced from some very signal Event. I don't pretend to a critical Exactness in this Case: The Chronology of the Old Testament was never yet perfectly agreed

agreed upon, and is not perhaps capable of being fairly and fully adjusted. However, according to the most generally receiv'd and probable Accounts, there will be found but very few Years Difference between these four great Periods, which I shall only here mention in general, leaving the Examination of Particulars to those that are skill'd in Sacred Chronology. Now these four Periods include, in the whole, the Space of 1960 Years, which being added to the Age of the World when God call'd *Abraham* out of *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, will fall in about the Time of the Birth of *Christ*, or the last Dispersion of the *Jews* by the *Romans*, according as we include or not include the seventy Years Captivity. Then as to the four distinct Periods, I will suppose at present, that *Abraham* left his own Country, when seventy Years old, *A. M.* 2077: And then from this Call of God and Promise to *Abraham* to give him and his Seed the Land of *Canaan*, to the Division of that Land to his Posterity by Lot, will be found just about the Number of 490 Years; and from that Time to the Reign of *David*, or to the Building of the Temple, about the same Space of Time; and from *David* to the *Babylonish* Captivity 490 Years more; and from thence to the Birth of *Christ*, those that have calculated *Daniel's* Seventy Weeks have proved to be just 490 Years. For if we include in this Computation the seventy Years Captivity, this makes up the
seventy

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seventy Years after the Birth of *Christ*, taken into the Reckoning of the seventy Weeks: Or if we cut off the seventy Years Captivity from the Line of Time, and consider it as an Interruption or Temporary Cessation of the *Jewish* State, then the 490 Years will reach to the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the Ceasing of the *Jewish* Polity.

The Three First Periods stand thus:

	<i>A. M.</i>
<i>Abraham's</i> going from <i>Ur</i> of the <i>Chaldees</i> , about	2077
	490
	—
The Division of the Land of <i>Canaan</i> , about	2567
	490
	—
The Reign of <i>David</i> , about — — — —	3057
	490
	—
<i>Jerusalem</i> taken by <i>Nebuchadnezzar</i> , about —	3547

And then from the Taking of *Jerusalem*, or the Return of the *Jews* from the *Babylonish* Captivity, there are accordingly 70 Weeks, or 490 Years, ending at the Birth of *Christ*, if we compute from the former; or at the Destruction of the City and Temple of *Jerusalem*, if we reckon from the latter. Now this fix'd and determinate Number of Years, repeated no less than four times, at such very remarkable *Epocha's*, and including no less than the whole Series of the *Jewish* Oeconomy from First to Last, from the Call of the Father of the Faithful, to the ceasing of his
Posterity

Posterity to be the People of God, may serve to shew us, how all the Works of Providence, even those which seem most casual and contingent, or most dependent on the Wills of free Agents, are sweetly order'd and disposed of by God, in *Number, Weight, and Measure*. This likewise may serve, in some Degree, as a Rule or Measure for regulating and adjusting the Scripture-Chronology, during that long Dispensation. Or however that be, I can't but observe farther, that the Bondage of the Children of *Israel* in *Egypt* was settled and order'd by God, according to this Number of 70 Years; their Continuance in that State of Bondage being just 210 Years, which make up three times 70; as if God had design'd thereby to point out and typify a threefold Captivity or Dispersion, viz. That which they then underwent, That afterwards in *Babylon*, and That since by the *Romans*. But though the Number *seventy*, when it stands *single*, does generally imply a determinate Space for Punishment; yet, when *full and complete*, it seems to denote the Extent of the Divine Patience and Long-suffering; and therefore our Saviour requires of *St. Peter*, and in him of all Christians, that in Imitation of the Divine Clemency and Goodness, they be ready to forgive an offending Brother, not only *seven times*, nor only *seventy times*, but *till seventy times seven*. This Number then, when perfect, or repeated seven times, implies, in the mystical Sense, either

either the full Time of God's forbearing to punish the Sins of Men, or the Time of Men's waiting for some signal Mercy or Blessing from God:

Those that are curious and studious in these Matters, may find in Scripture several other remarkable Instances of the Number *Seven* to exercise their Thoughts upon. I shall briefly consider two or three of the most material. For not to mention now the *seven Shepherds*, the *seven Lamps*, or *Eyes of the Lord*, the *sprinkling the Blood seven times before the Lord, before the Veil of the Sanctuary*, &c. it deserves more particularly to be noted, that *Elijah*, in a Time of great Drought, commanded his Servant to go up *seven times*, and look towards the Sea, to see if he could discover any Signs or Symptoms of Rain; and that at the *seventh* time he discover'd a little Cloud, no bigger, to appearance, than a Man's Hand, but That the Cause and Fore-runner of abundance of Rain. We may farther observe, that *Elisba* order'd *Naaman* the Syrian to wash *seven times* in the River *Jordan*, and that thereupon he was cleansed from his Leprosy, and *his Flesh came again as a young Child's*. Now these are plain Intimations, that a *sevenfold* Service, Attendance, or Performance, is sometimes necessary, in order to remove the Judgments of God, and procure his Favour and Benediction. The seventh Day or Sabbath, we know, was set apart by God for the solemn Commemoration

tion of Things past, *viz.* his ceasing from the Works of Creation, and the *Israelites* ceasing from their Bondage in *Egypt*. But the seventh Year (which was likewise consecrated to them by Divine Appointment) seem'd to have respect to Things to come. The *Hebrew* Servants were to serve no longer than *six* Years; in the *seventh* they were to be set at liberty, and when dismiss'd, they were not be sent away empty. Every *seventh* Year, which is call'd the *Sabbatical* Year, was a Year of Rest to the Land, and of Release to Debtors; and every *seventh* *Sabbatical* Year, which is call'd the *Jubilee*, was a Year of Restitution and great Rejoicing. For by this Ordinance the *Israelites* were hinder'd from alienating or transferring their Lands or Inheritance for any longer Time than *fifty* Years, that is, from one *Jubilee* to another; when they were to revert to the first Owners. And are not all these plain Types and Figures of some future State or Period of Rest, Release, and Triumph? And what can this be, but *those Times of Restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the Mouth of all his holy Prophets since the World began?* When there will be a perfect Rest, a final Deliverance, and a complete Redemption; when even the Creature itself shall be deliver'd from the Bondage of Corruption into the glorious Liberty of the Children of God, and Servants be as free as their Masters: When what was lost in this

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World, or pass'd into other Hands, will be restor'd an Hundredfold: When the great Proprietor of all Things will make good his Promise to his ancient People, to *Abraham* and to his Seed, and give them again the Land of *Canaan* for Inheritance, with great Advantages and manifold Blessings: When Man shall rest from the Work of his Hands, as God did from his; when even the Land shall enjoy her Sabbath, and be more fruitful without Labour and Toil, than ever it was since the Fall with the greatest Care and Cultivation: When all Debts and Obligations shall be cancell'd or discharg'd, and we shall, in the highest Sense of those Words of the Apostle, *owe no Man any thing, but to love one another*. Such is the Heritage reserv'd for the Servants of the Lord; and such *the Rest that remaineth to the People of God!*

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S. D. G.



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THE
PATRIARCHAL AGE
BEFORE THE
FLOOD,
A
Typical Representation
OF ALL THE
Succeeding Ages of the World.



T H E

Patriarchal Age, &c.

SINCE the long Chain of Providential Events, that has and will run through the several Ages of the World, is variously represented and foreshewn in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, either more clearly and distinctly, or more remotely and obscurely, either by way of plain, express, and literal Prediction, or of Types, Figures, and Allegories; it may be worth our while to trace Things *ab origine*, and to see and examine what Footsteps, Grounds, or Foundation we can discover, in the most primitive Times and among the most antient Patriarchs, of the several successive States of the Church of God in the different Ages of the World. The History indeed we have of These is very short, consisting of but few Particulars, and those express'd in general Terms, and seemingly of no great Importance, as containing only the Name, Life, and Death of each Patriarch, with two or three incidental Passages beside. And yet as short and imperfect as this Account may at first appear to be,

great Discoveries may be made from it; and that dark Age of the World may be found to afford no small Light to us, in relation to All that have and shall come after it. We are assured from the Authority of St. *Jude*, that *Enoch*, the seventh from Adam, was endued with a Spirit of Prophecy, and that he who lived in the *Beginning* prophesied of what should come to pass at the *End* of the World. And the Prophecy of *Lamech* concerning his Son, is, in its full and ultimate Sense, most reasonably referr'd to the last State of Things, when the Curse shall be wholly remov'd from the Earth, and the *Messiah* (of whom *Noah* was an eminent Type) that great Instaurator of all Things, and Founder of the new World, in the new *Paradisaical* State, shall comfort Mankind concerning their Work and the Toil of their Hands. And if these two Patriarchs were directed by the Spirit of Prophecy to look forward to the final Issue and Event of Things in this World, why may not the other Patriarchs, though not perhaps endued with a Prophetick Spirit, be yet consider'd as Prophetick Types of the Ages yet to come? Certain it is, that their *Names*, according to the receiv'd Interpretation of them, and their Order of Succession, carry a plain Aspect that way. But before I speak particularly of this, it may be necessary to consider a few things by way of Introduction: As,

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1. Whether we ought to stick to the *Hebrew* Computation for the Lives of these Patriarchs, or to that of the LXX. For my part I can see no Inconvenience that will attend our retaining the *Hebrew* Chronology during that Period; and certainly we ought not to depart from it without some great Reason or Necessity. On the contrary, there is one weighty, and, I think, unanswerable Reason, why we ought to prefer this Chronology before the other, and that is, that, according to the latter, *Methusalem* is made to live fourteen or sixteen Years after the Flood, contrary to what *Moses* expressly affirms, that there were only Eight Persons saved in the Ark, viz. *Noah* and his Wife, and his three Sons and their three Wives. Some of the Learned likewise have observ'd, that the Age of the Patriarchs in the LXX Version is written only in *Numerals*, but in the *Hebrew* Text in Words at full Length; which is much less subject to Error and Mistake, than the other Way. Taking it therefore for granted, till I see sufficient Reason to the contrary, that the Lives of the Patriarchs are truly stated according to the *Hebrew* Account, I observe,

2. That the whole Number of Years which these Patriarchs lived in Succession before the Flood, computing from Father to Son, is one Thousand, six Hundred, and fifty-six; which yet is not the full Complement of Years that God design'd to indulge the Antedilu-

vian World. For when he spake to *Noah* in this Manner, *My Spirit shall not always strive with Man, for that he also is Flesh*; he immediately added, *yet his Days shall be an hundred and twenty Years*: which is generally supposed to be that Space of Time that God allow'd for their Repentance, or to see whether they would repent or not. But when, instead of regarding his merciful Warning and the Preaching of *Noah*, they still grew worse and worse, God shorten'd the Term by *twenty Years*. For just before 'tis said, that *Noah* was five hundred Years old, when he begat *Shem*, *Ham*, and *Japhet*; and afterwards that he was six hundred Years old, when the Flood came; so that there was only an hundred Years from the Time of God's making that Promise, to the Time of the Deluge: And even some Part of that Hundred may be taken away; for it was after that *Noah* had his Sons, and how long after we know not, that God said unto him, *My Spirit shall not always strive with Man*. But I'll suppose this Space to be about four Years, and then the Number of Years design'd for the Antediluvian World will be one Thousand, six hundred, and eighty*; which is

* To make this clearer, I here add, that God shorten'd the Term of 120 Years by one fifth Part, bringing the Flood upon the Old World 24 Years sooner than he had design'd; which 24 Years being added to the Age of the World at the Flood, viz. 1656, make the whole Time intended for their Probation 1680 Years.

just forty-two times forty, under both which Numbers are couch'd important Mysteries. As to the first Number, *forty Days* and *forty Years* are that Proportion of Time that God usually allots for *Penance* or *Probation*, in reference, most likely, to the same Number of Days allow'd our First Parents in Paradise for their Trial, as I have endeavour'd to prove elsewhere, viz. in a Sermon on *Christ's* Temptation in the Wilderness. To what is there said, I shall here add for a farther Confirmation and Illustration of that Point, that the Law of *Moses* enjoins that a Woman after the Birth of a Male-Child, shall be separated from the Congregation, or not suffer'd to enter the Sanctuary for the Space of forty Days; and double that Number is required after the Birth of a Female, The Reason of which plainly is to remind the Woman of the original and complicated Guilt contracted by the First of her Sex, and of her Exclusion from Paradise thereupon. For, as *St. Paul* observes, *the Woman being deceiv'd, was in the Transgression*. And as the Hazard and hard Labour of Child-bearing is the very Curse or Punishment denounced by God against her on that account; so her Separation from the holy Assemblies for eighty, or twice forty Days, upon the Birth of one of her own Sex, shews her Sin to be double to that of *Adam*, and therefore is a double Penance enjoin'd; and that in reference to the Original Failure at the first Trial of forty Days: To
which

which all other Penances and Probations in Scripture seem plainly to allude. Now this Number of Years multiplied by forty-two was design'd by God for the Probation of the Antediluvian World. *Forty* has a Retrospect to the First Trial in Paradise; and *Forty-two* look forward to the Fulness of Sin and Punishment in the last Days. For, 1. *Forty-two Days* being six Weeks, or six times seven Days, points at the *sixth* Day of the seven, in which Man was created; and ever since his great Abuse of that Goodness by Sin, the Number *six* has been ominous and fatal to Mankind: And this Number thrice repeated contains the Name of him who is emphatically call'd *the Man of Sin*, i. e. in whom the Fulness of Sin will be recapitulated or summ'd up: And in his Days will be the Fulness of Punishment for this Life, or as to the Righteous. And farther, *forty-two Months*, which amount to three Years and a half, is the Time predetermin'd for the Reign of Antichrist; in which the Measure of the World's Iniquity will be fill'd up, or at least arrive to the highest Pitch it will ever be suffer'd to reach; but it will not be suffer'd to proceed to its utmost Extent: For then, as our Saviour intimates, *no Flesh living could be saved*: And therefore *for the Elect's sake those Days shall be shorten'd*. And this was the Case of the Antediluvian World. Had That been permitted to continue *twenty or twenty-four* Years longer, as God seem'd to have

have intended for its Probation, not one righteous Person might have escaped. And this I take to be one Reason of God's translating *Enoch*; which was not only lest Wickedness should beguile his Soul, but that he might not be cut off, as righteous *Abel* was before, by the Hands of Violence, which had then fill'd the Earth; since the more eminent he was for Virtue and Piety, the greater Object was he at that time of Hatred and Malice. And therefore had the World continued but a little longer, even *Noah* himself, without a Miracle, might have fallen a Sacrifice to that ungodly Generation. But there was another Reason founded upon this for the Translation of *Enoch*, as also of *Elias* afterwards. In and before the Reign of Antichrist, the World will be so prodigiously over-run with Wickedness, that even among the Righteous then remaining, there may not be found a sufficient Number to stem the Torrent of Iniquity, or Any sufficiently qualified and prepared to undertake and execute the Office that God designs to entrust with those Two Great Prophets, who at that time will be sent into the World to oppose Antichrist, and undeceive the deluded Christians. But if these had been suffer'd first to die, and afterwards been rais'd from the Dead for this Purpose; as This might have broke in upon the Order of the Resurrection, so neither would it have answer'd one End that God propos'd to himself in this Dispensation; which

which was that these two Prophets should suffer Martyrdom under Antichrist, that their Bodies should lie unburied in the open Street for three Days and a half, and that then God would exert his Power upon them to the Conviction or Confusion of their Enemies. All which seems very inconsistent with the Nature and State of a glorified Body: Nor can it be well supposed, that in such a Body they could be so well qualified for discharging their Office, as they will be in that Body which they lived in upon Earth. Both of them lived in the most corrupt and degenerate Times; the First in the Old World, and the Other under the great Apostasy in the Reign of King *Abab*. And their great Experience in this respect, beside their other Qualifications, must render them the fittest Instruments in the Hands of Providence for conducting and carrying on the wonderful Work they are so peculiarly designed and reserv'd for. These two eminent Saints and holy Prophets will then, by their venerable Presence, Preaching, and Miracles, attract the Eyes and engage the Attention of an Apostate World, and confirm their Mission by the Destruction of many of their Enemies. *Elias* was of no great Age when he was taken up into Heaven, but *Enoch* was three hundred and sixty-five Years old at the Time of his Translation, that is, he lived just as many Years as there are Days in the Year; but this was not much above one Third of the

the Age of some of the other Patriarchs :
The Length of whose Lives I shall now,

3. Endeavour to account for. *Pererius*, in his Commentary on *Genesis*, assigns seven Causes for the long Lives of the Patriarchs, but omits the principal one. The *first* Cause he mentions was the Goodness of their Constitution, and the exact Temperature of the Human Body, as it came but newly out of the Hands of God, and was then vigorous and strong. The *second* Cause he assigns was their Temperance and Continence. The *third*, the Excellency of their Food, and the Fruitfulness of the Earth. The *fourth*, the Knowledge that *Adam* had (and must be supposed to communicate to the rest of the Patriarchs) of the Nature of Things, or of their natural Powers and Virtues, and their Fitness and Aptness to preserve and prolong Life. The *fifth* he takes notice of, was the kindly Aspects and benign Influences of the heavenly Bodies. *Sixthly*, he observes that God ordain'd this Longævity for the greater and quicker Increase of Mankind ; and *seventhly*, for the Invention and Improvement of Arts and Sciences, for the Uses and Necessities of Human Life. These Causes or Reasons indeed, are such as may deserve our Notice ; but these are not the only, or the chief Causes. Had this learned Commentator consider'd the natural Cause or first Occasion of Death, he might have found out the true or principal Cause of the long Lives of those Patriarchs.

Now

Now Death was threaten'd against, and was the Consequent of, the Breach of that one positive Law that was given to *Adam*: But there was no *positive* Law, that we read of, given to the Patriarchs: And *where there is no Law, there is no Transgression*; and where there is no Transgression, the Punishment of Death cannot take place. 'Tis true, they had a Law written in their Hearts, and, as the Apostle speaks, *were a Law unto themselves*: And for not repenting of the Breaches and Violations of this Law of Nature at the Preaching of *Noah*, they were at last threaten'd with Death and Destruction. But still as they had no positive Law given them that threaten'd them with Death upon their Transgression of it, they may truly be said in this respect, not to have finned *after the Similitude of Adam's Transgression*, and therefore might be permitted by God to live to the utmost Bounds and Extent of Nature: And that Death prevail'd over them at last, must be owing to the prime original Transgression, or to the Imputation of *Adam's Sin*, which first introduced Death into the World, and gave it a binding Force upon his Posterity, even upon those righteous Patriarchs that descended from him, and whose Lives were extended to near a Thousand Years. But it does not appear, that the Generality of Men before the Flood attain'd to a like Age with those first *ten* Patriarchs. These were of the Holy Seed, and singled out by God for transmitting

mitting an holy Posterity through all the Ages of the World. And as each of these was successively to represent a different Age and a distinct State of the Church, their Lives were prolong'd accordingly, that so they might be the fitter Types and Figures in that respect, and that the Length of the one might bear a near Resemblance to the Duration of the other. But as to the Generations of the Wicked, that *World of the Ungodly*, as St. Peter calls them, we don't find that it was so with them. We have indeed no Account at all of *their* Lives; and considering the State of the World at that Time, 'tis more natural and congruous to suppose, that their own Wickedness shorten'd their Days, that they often died by the Hands of one another, and that many of the Righteous likewise were destroy'd by violent Means. As the First Man that was *born* was a Murderer, and the First that *died* a Martyr; so we may reasonably conclude, that when Violence had fill'd and cover'd the Earth, the Good and Virtuous could not, without a Series of Miracles, escape the Hands of the Wicked: Unless we will suppose that there were none *Righteous* beside those *ten* Patriarchs recorded by *Moses*, which it must be somewhat hard to believe or account for, during so long a Tract of Time. Every one of these, except *Enoch*, begat Sons and Daughters, beside That particularly distinguish'd; and the Three Sons of *Noah* might not im-
probably

probably have Children before the Flood came. We find they had Wives which went with them into the Ark; and these they must reasonably be supposed to have married time enough before to have had Children by them. They were near an hundred Years old at the Time of the Flood; and *Mahaleel* and *Enoch* begat Children at sixty-five. These Considerations may induce us to think, that there were more righteous Persons in the Antediluvian World than what are recorded in the short History of *Moses*; but that these either died Martyrs for their Piety, or that God shorten'd their Days and took them away by some natural Disease, to prevent their being tainted with the Contagion of Sin, or cut off by wicked Hands, or that they might not see the Evil coming upon the World. And this will be, in a great measure, the Case of Christians in the last Days. These Things being premised, I proceed to consider the Order of the Patriarchs, as *Typical Representatives* of the several Ages of the World, which stands thus and imports as follows.

(1.) *Adam*, in this figurative or prophetic Scheme, stands alone and by himself, as the Head, Type, and Representative of the Old World, or of the whole Patriarchal Age before the Flood: *i. e.* In his *renew'd* and *spiritual* State, for that holy Seed that descended from him, or that whole Succession of righteous Patriarchs that are reckon'd up before the Flood: In his *fallen* and *corrupt* State,

State, for his whole degenerate Race, during that Period. And his Name signifying *red Earth*, denotes the State of the World at that Time, as first stain'd with the Blood of righteous *Abel*, as afterwards fill'd with Violence, and as immersed in Earthly-mindedness and Sensuality.

(2.) *Seth*, as importing *Resurrection*, is a fit Type of the Preservation of the World from utter Destruction by *Noah*; the New World being raised and replenish'd by means of that same Person that proceeded from, and made his Escape from the Old, as *Seth* did from *Adam*; and therefore is said to be begotten in his Father's *Likeness*, that is, after *Adam* had recover'd his original Righteousness, in some measure, by his Repentance; to which the great Misfortune that befel him in his two first Sons might not a little contribute.

(3.) *Enos* signifies *Man*, and imports that this Patriarch in particular acted like a *true Man*, whose Duty and Privilege it is to serve and worship his Creator. Accordingly in his Days, as it is expressly said, and most likely by his Instruction and Example, *Men began to call on the Name of the Lord*. And such Invocation, or the Performance of Divine Worship, is the distinguishing Character of Human Nature, the proper and peculiar Employment of *rational* Creatures, not the least Shadow of any such thing being to be found among the Creatures *below* us. This Patri-

arch then exhibits to us, in a fuitable and lively Manner, the State of the Church of God from *Abraham* to *Joskua*; during which Time the Worship and Service of God was settled by Divine Appointment: Then were Men call'd from a State of Idolatry, had a written Law deliver'd to them, and solemnly and constantly invoked the Name of the Lord in fundry Ordinances, and in divers Manners.

(4.) *Cainan*, both in Name and Signification, as denoting *Possession*, represents that Age of the World, or State of the Church, which commenced from the Children of *Israel*'s taking Possession of the Land of *Canaan*, and continued to the Days of *David*.

(5.) *Mahaleel*, which is, by Interpretation, *Praise the Lord*, is a proper and significant Representative of the Regal State of the *Jews*, or of the Church of God from the Days of *David*, that sweet Singer of *Israel*, to the Time of the Captivity.

(6.) *Jared*, whose Name imports *Descending*, Low, and Humble, is a strong Type and Figure of the low, depressed, and afflicted State both of the *Jewish* and *Christian* Church from the Time of the Captivity to the Conversion of *Constantine the Great*, and the Establishment of Christianity by Human Laws; which is set forth to us in an eminent and perspicuous Manner, in the

(7th) Patriarch, whose Name *Enoch* signifies likewise *Ascending*; and as he was
translated

translated that he might not see Death, so was the Church of God translated now with respect to Place, People, and Condition, that it should not see Death, or any longer suffer Persecution, which it had underwent, more or less, from the Time of *Salmaneser* and *Nebuchadnezzar*, to the End of the last general Persecution under *Dioclesian*. And as *Enoch* walk'd with God and pleas'd him, and was taken away from the Society of Men in this World, and deliver'd from the filthy Conversation of the Wicked, to enjoy the blessed Company of Saints and Angels; so did the Church in *Pergamus* first walk with God, and do Things pleasing to him, and after that was freed from its Enemies and Persecutors; and Christians were no longer forced to live in the midst of *Jews* and *Heathens*, but had their Conversation only among themselves.

(8.) The longest Liver, *Methusalem*, represents the long Age of *Popery*, or the Church of God during the Prevalency of that corrupt Religion; which first commenced about the Time of the Downfal of the Western Empire, and will continue to near the End of the present World, as that Patriarch lived to near the Conclusion of the Old. And from hence we may make one useful Observation concerning the different States both of the *Jewish* and *Christian* Church. For as each Patriarch continued in Life some hundred Years after he had begot a Son and Suc-

cessor in the sacred Line; so every *prior* State of the Church *still subsisted*, in some Degree, *after* the Commencement of that which immediately follow'd. But then by the last it is that the Church is generally denominated, or by which it acquir'd a new Character: So that the several States of the Church may be consider'd as partly successive, and partly concurrent or concomitant; *successive* so far, as that the *new* does not take place till after some Continuance, though before the utter Extinction, of the *old*; and so far *concurrent*, that one does not end when the other begins, but Both run on together for a greater or lesser Space. In the History of the Patriarchs we have an Account of the Birth of each, of his Maturity, or of the Time of his begetting Children, of the Length of his Days after That, and of his Death. And so in the several Parts or Periods of the Church of God, we are accordingly to look for its Beginning, its Progress, and Perfection; and then for its gradual Declension, and Expiration. To make this plain by the Instance I am upon, that of *Methusalem*—He was born when his Father *Enoch* was sixty-five Years old; and when he himself had lived an hundred and eighty and seven Years, he then begat the next Patriarch *Lamech*; and then it was that he commenced a *Type* of a New State of the Church, as to its Beginning, (*viz.* that State of the Church which is comprehended under *Thyatira* and *Sardis*, towards the

the End of the former of which the *Popish* Errors began to sprout forth and appear) though the Father was still the Type of the preceding State in its Maturity and Perfection (*viz.* so much of the *Thyatirian* as was prior to Popery, and still retain'd its Integrity) and that for the Space of an hundred and thirteen Years, that he afterwards liv'd with his Son upon Earth: So that a new State sometimes commences before the old be arriv'd to its Perfection, and always before its Expiration. The Difference of each State, *as to Duration*, is represented by the different Age of each Patriarch, when he begat his Son; on which account we may observe, that *Methusalem*, though the longest Liver, saw no more than three Generations after him, *viz.* his Son, his Grandson *Noah*, and *Noah's* Children. The Reason was because *Noah* was five hundred Years old, when he begat *Shem*, *Ham*, and *Japhet*; whereas by reason of the few Years of some of the other Patriarchs, and the moderate Age of the rest, in comparison, when they had Children, it came to pass that *Adam* saw no less than Eight Generations, and liv'd to the fifty-sixth Year of *Lamech*, the Father of *Noah*: which is the

(9th) Patriarch in Order of Succession, and whose Name is, by Interpretation, one *humbled*, or smitten, or in a State of Exinanition; which points at the State of the Church since the Reformation, *first*, as eminent for its Meekness, Moderation, Patience, and Humility;

mility; and afterwards as in a low and declining Condition, by the great Decay of Faith and Piety. The Age of this Patriarch is *seven hundred seventy-seven*, a remarkable Number, that looks with a full Aspect upon the *seventh Age* of the Church, and with a Glance too at those particular Years in that Age. This Patriarch was a Prophet himself, and what relates to him should be look'd upon as Prophetical. Indeed we have Reason to believe, that there is nothing reveal'd concerning any one of those earliest Fathers, merely as a Matter of History, without any farther Import or Signification. His Prophecy relating to his Son can be fully verified only in *Christ*, since *Noah* did not and could not give Men Rest from *Toil* and *Labour*. That Part of the Curse is still remaining, though it may, in some Sense, be consider'd as a Blessing, as 'tis a proper Preservative, during the present State of Need and Corruption, from Indigence, Temptation, and Sin.

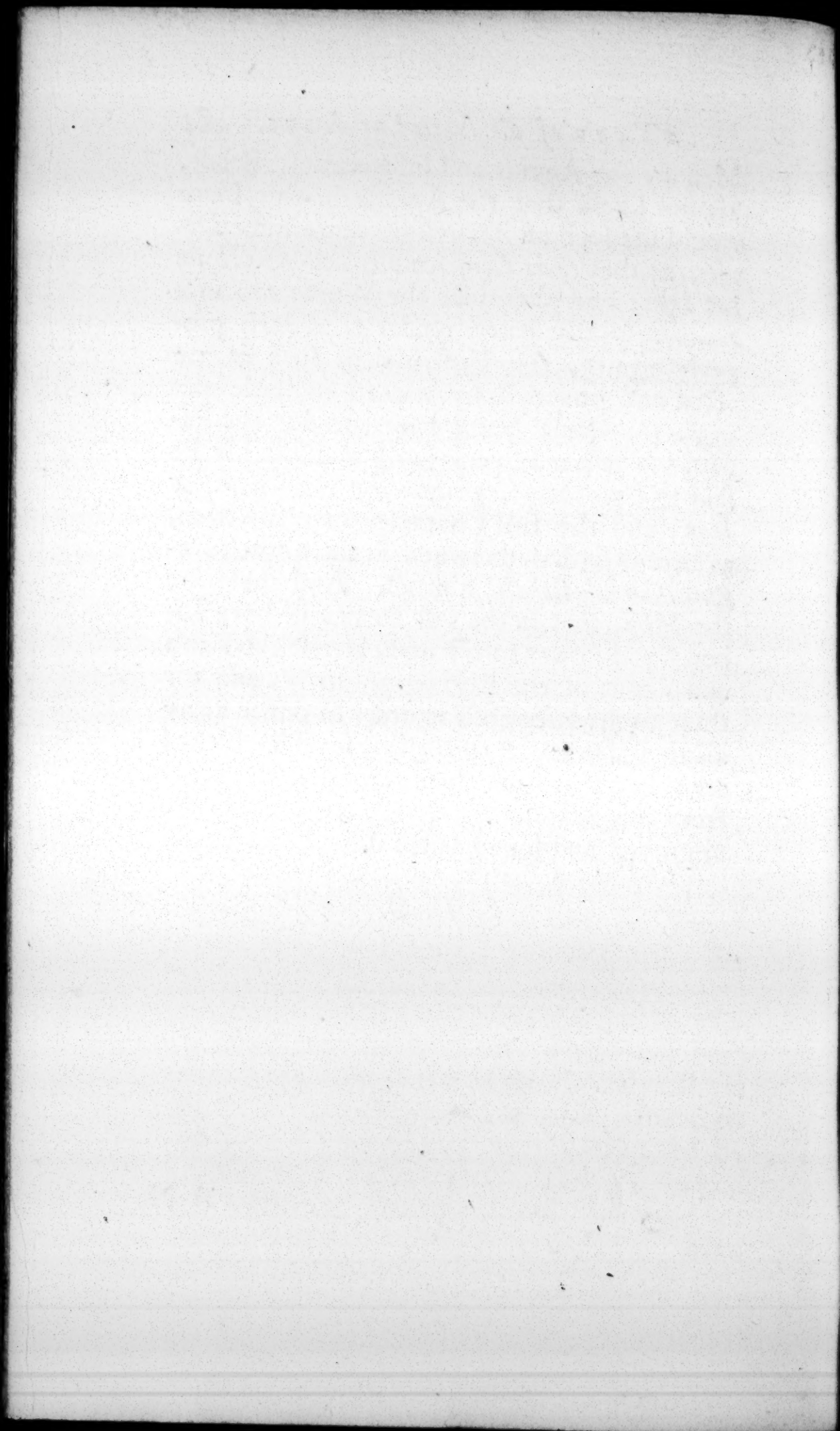
(10thly,) *Noah* is to be consider'd as the Scripture-*Fanus*, with two Faces, the one looking back upon the Old World, and the other upon the New; so that, in different Respects, he is both a *Type* and an *Antitype*; the former only in the first six hundred Years of his Life, and the latter in the three hundred and fifty Years remaining; in which he stands not for the End, but for the Beginning of the New World, and answers to, or is typified by the first Patriarch after *Adam*, viz.
Seth:

Seth: But as a *Type* he points at the End and Consummation of all Things, at the Overflowings of Ungodliness in the last Days, and the Destruction of the World by a Deluge of Fire. His Age at the Time of the Flood is no obscure Intimation of the Age of the World at the general Conflagration, or Day of Judgment; six Hundred Years in the *Type* (one in *ten*, and he the *tenth* Patriarch) being a sufficient and significant Foretoken of so many Thousands in the *Antitype*. And this Opinion of the World's continuing just *six Thousand Years*, obtain'd very early in the Church of *Christ*, and is said by some to be deriv'd from *St. John*: But whether it was receiv'd from him, or any other Apostle, or from more ancient Tradition, or collected only from some Intimations in Scripture, this is certain, that 'tis a Point of Doctrine that was at first generally and firmly believ'd. And as *Noah* was the *Tenth* from *Adam*, a Number of Plenitude and Perfection; so his Name signifies both *Just* and *Rest*; *Just*, as he was a Preacher of Righteousness to the Old World, and *Rest*, as he is a Type of that Rest which the present World will at last enjoy, after the ceasing of the Antichristian Deluge; which Deluge will rise and fall, like the Flood, and overwhelm the Face of the Earth. For then the Corruption of Human Nature, and the Wickedness of Mankind (which have, since the Days of *Noah*, been restrain'd and kept within Bounds, like

the Waters of the great Deep, by the overruling Providence of God) will be suffer'd to break forth again with an impetuous Force and uncontroul'd Licentiousness, and to run almost their full Length, as being set forward, fermented, and agitated by the powerful Energy of evil Spirits, the Spirits that will then more than ordinarily *work in the Children of Disobedience*. St. Paul, speaking of these Times, has a remarkable Passage to this purpose — *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the last Days some shall depart from the Faith, giving heed to seducing Spirits and Doctrines of Devils, speaking Lyes in Hypocrisy, having their Conscience fear'd with an hot Iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from Meats, which God hath created to be receiv'd with Thanksgiving of them which believe and know the Truth*. Now here we may observe, that the Expressions *forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from Meats*, refer directly (as may be seen in the Original) not to *seducing Spirits*, nor to the *Doctrines*, but to what our Translators have too literally render'd *Devils*. But the Apostle speaks of this *forbidding to marry, &c.* as an Authoritative Act, or as establishing Iniquity by Law, which has been already fulfill'd in the *Mystical*, and will yet farther in the *Personal* Antichrist. But then no such Authority is or can be exercised by *Devils themselves, as such*. They are indeed too often the Prompters and Seducers, but
Men

Men are the Agents and Instruments. Beside, 'tis not likely that the Apostle in this Place would use such an Expression concerning *Devils*, as that *their Conscience is fear'd with an hot Iron*; and therefore the Words *διδασκαλίας δαιμονίων* might be better render'd, at least properly signify, the Doctrines of such as are acted and govern'd by wicked invisible Beings, the Cause being here put for the Effect. These may very justly and suitably be said to *have their Conscience fear'd with an hot Iron*; and the full Character of these Men, as here describ'd, belongs, in the highest Degree, to *Antichrist* himself. And these are the Men, that in the last Days will have Liberty and Power to try and exercise the Faith and Virtue of the Righteous, to sift and try them to the uttermost, in order to purge away all their Dross. And blessed, for ever blessed are they, that shall then come out as Silver from this refining Fire, that shall at last be approved and found faithful.

S. D. G.



AN
EXPLANATION
OF THE
Eleventh and Twelfth Chapters
OF THE
Second Book of ESDRAS.



T H E

P R E F A C E.

THERE is not perhaps any Book, Ancient or Modern, Sacred or Profane, about which the Learned have been more divided in their Opinions, than this of Esdras; some setting an high Value upon it, on account of the many Citations made from it by our Lord himself (who has dignified it likewise with the Title of the Wisdom of God*) and of the many great and important Truths supposed to be couch'd under the several Visions represented therein: while others esteem it no better than a mere Fiction or Fable, the Contrivance of some Heretick or Judaizing Christian, of later Date than the Writings of the Apostles, and full of Absurdities, Errors, and Inconsistencies. And as to the Prophetical Part, some condemn it for being too plain, and others for being too obscure. In the midst of such opposite Sentiments, I would only observe, 1. That there is a plain Intimation, Chap. viii. 37, that what is spoken or deliver'd by Esdras himself, is not always to be depended upon as undoubtedly true

* Compare Luke xi. 49. with 2 Esdras i. 32.

or certain: For after he had propos'd several Things by way of Objection or Enquiry, the Angel tells him, Some things hast thou spoken aright, which supposes that several other things he had spoken wrong (See Chap. iv.); and therefore it will be necessary to distinguish between what is spoken by Esdras (who appears at this time under the Character of a Catechumen in these Matters) and what by the Angel, or in the Name of God himself. 2. That there are great Corruptions and Interpolations in several Places, is allow'd by those that are most zealous for the Genuineness of this Book. The late worthy and learned Author of the History of Montanism (who in a critical and very curious Dissertation endeavour'd some Years ago to revive its Credit amongst us, and has nicely search'd and examin'd into its Age and Authority*) was of opinion that the Second Book of Esdras, as it stands in our Bible, is a Translation from a Translation; that there are not only Faults in the Translation itself, but also clear Marks of Interpolation, and manifest Dislocations and Transpositions†. He supposes likewise this to be one of those mystical, cabbalistical, and recondite Writings among the Jews, that were not design'd to be manifest to many, but to be kept up as precious Cu-

* See *An Epistolary Discourse concerning the Books of Ezra, genuine and spurious*, by the late Learned and Pious Francis Lee, M. D. Sold by M. Smith, at Bishop Beveridge's Head in Pater-noster-Row, 1722.

† Pag. 51.

riofities in the Hands of a Few *. And for this Reason, among others, (tho' he allows it to have a lofty Prophetick Character, such as is hardly exceeded by any of the undoubted Prophets) he concludes, that were it never so genuine, it could not have been placed among the Prophetick Books †. Now whatever Errors or Corruptions may have befallen this valuable Piece of Antiquity, these most probably have been occasion'd by its coming into the Hands of those that were either ill-disposed towards Christianity, or not duly prepared to receive and understand the mysterious Truths therein contain'd ||; by which means it may have been made to bear somewhat of a new Face, or one very different from its original Form. But though this is probably the Fate of some Parts and Passages of the Book, as we now have it, I can't easily believe this to be the Case of the whole. On the contrary, I think I have sufficient Reason to conclude, that some whole Chapters, and some very large Paragraphs, have escaped this supposed general Deformation: Among which may be reckon'd the two first and the two last Chapters, and those that I have attempted to explain. It were greatly to be wish'd indeed, that we had a correct and perfect Copy, or at least a Translation of this Book from the Arabick Copy, as we were made to hope for; and that the Publisher of Dr. Lee's Dissertation had fulfill'd his Promise of pub-

* This is expressly enjoin'd *Esdra*s by the Angel, ch. viii. 62.—xii. 37, 38.—xiv. 26, 45, 46. † P. 31.

|| See Note towards the End on Chap. vii. 28, 29, 30.

lishing, in the next place, his Exposition of the Seven Visions of Esdras. Till this be publish'd (which has not been done as yet that I know of) the following Essay will not, I trust, be unacceptable to the Reader; especially as it may be a Means of drawing forth that other Exposition, and of exciting some able Hand to attempt some farther Discoveries in other Parts of this Prophetical Book, which, as that Learned Author observes, contains unquestionable Matters of the greatest Moment, both to the Jewish and to the Christian Peculium, conformable to the Prophets of the one, and the Apostles of the other; such as are worthy to be thoroughly look'd into †.*

As the Eleventh Chapter contains the Vision of the Eagle, and the Twelfth the Interpretation, I have, for the most part, consider'd them both together, but sometimes distinctly and apart; and since there are several Verses in the former, that are not interpreted by the Angel in the latter, (not because they are less material, but because perhaps they are more easy to be understood, than the other) I have endeavour'd to explain the chief of these likewise. And these together may be sufficient to shew, that those two Chapters do evidently contain a most remarkable Prophecy of the fourth Kingdom of the Gentiles, from the Time of its Commencement, to the firm and happy Establishment of Christianity by Human Laws.

* See the Preface to that Dissertation.

† P. 29.

A N
EXPLANATION
OF THE

ELEVENTH and TWELFTH Chapters
of the Second Book of *ESDRAS*.

CHAP. xi. 1, 2, 5, 6.

THEN saw I a dream, and behold, there came up from the sea an eagle, which had twelve feather'd wings, and three heads.

And I saw, and behold, she spread her wings over all the earth, and all the winds of the air blew on her, and were gathered together.

Moreover I beheld, and lo, the eagle flew with her feathers, and reigned upon earth,

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and

CHAP. xii. 10—14.

AND he said unto me, This is the interpretation of the vision:

The eagle whom thou sawest come up from the sea, is the kingdom which was seen in the vision of thy brother Daniel.

But it was not expounded to him, therefore now I declare it unto thee.

Behold, the days will come that there shall rise up a kingdom

U

dom

and over them that dwell therein. dom upon earth; and it shall be feared a-

And I saw that all things under heaven were subject unto her, above all the kingdoms that were before it.

and no man spake against her, no, not one creature upon earth. In the same shall twelve kings reign, one after another.

The *Eagle from the Sea* plainly denotes the *Roman Empire*; the *twelve feather'd Wings*, the first twelve Emperors; the *three Heads*, the three last persecuting Emperors (ch. xi. 9.); the *spreading of her Wings over all the Earth*, the Extent of her Dominion and Conquest; the *Subjection of all things under Heaven to her*, in such a manner as that no Man spake against her, no not one Creature upon Earth, the Irresistibleness and Dreadfulness of her Power above all that went before, or that was to be seen in any of the preceding Monarchies (ch. xii. 13.)

* For that this is the *Fourth Kingdom of the Gentiles* denoted by the fourth Beast in *Daniel*, is expressly asserted both in chap. xi. 39, 40. and here in chap. xii. 11, 12. The eagle whom thou sawest come up from the sea, is the kingdom which was seen in the vision of thy brother Daniel. But it was not expounded unto him, therefore now I declare it unto thee. This is sufficient of itself, without the Em-

* See Dan. vii. 7, 19, 23.

of the *Second Book of ESDRAS*. 29:
blem of the Eagle†, to determine what
Kingdom is here meant, which can be no
other than the *Roman*. This was shewn, but
not expounded to *Daniel* so particularly as
'tis here. What was reveal'd to him con-
cerning this Kingdom was only *in general*,
excepting what relates to the *little Horn* that
is to arise in the latter Part of it. But here
is as full and particular a Description of the
Fourth Gentile Kingdom, as we have in the
11th of *Daniel* of the *Third or Grecian*.

CHAP. XI. 3, 11.

*And I beheld, and
out of her feathers
there grew other con-
trary feathers; and
they became little fea-
thers and small.*

*And I number'd her
contrary feathers, and
behold, there were eight
of them.*

CHAP. XII. 19, 20.

*And whereas thou
sawest the eight small
under-feathers sticking
to her wings, this is
the interpretation:*

*That in him there
shall arise eight kings,
whose time shall be but
small, and their years
swift.*

What is here call'd *contrary Feathers*, must
denote something contrary to Kingly Go-
vernment, or to the Right of Government;
but then as these are said to be *small under-
feathers sticking to the Eagle's Wings*, they
will signify something approaching near to

† Which is a Figure of oppressing Kings or States. See
Ezek. xvii. 2, 7, 12, 22.

292 *An* EXPLANATION of Ch. XI, XII,
the Right or Possession of Kingly Power.
Now we find the *Romans*, after the Exclusion
of their Kings, fell under divers Forms of
Government, and were much endanger'd by
Civil Discords and Conspiracies. And all
these put together, will, if I mistake not,
be found to answer exactly the Number of
the contrary Feathers, and of the Feathers
sticking to the Wings, as thus— 1. The Se-
nate. 2. The Consuls. 3. The *Decemviri*.
4. The Military Tribunes. 5. The Tribunes
of the People. 6. The Dictators. 7. The
Conspirators, as *Catiline*, &c. and 8. The
Triumviri, viz. *Lepidus*, *Antonius*, and *Octa-
vianus*. I make a Division of the *Tribunes*,
because these were really distinct, even as
distinct as are now amongst us, the Serjeants
of a *Corporation*, and the Serjeants of an
Army. And the *Time* of all these was but
small, and their *Years* *swift*, except that of
the Senate and the Consuls, as is signified in
the following Words.

CHAP. xii. 21. *And two of them shall pe-
rish; the middle time approaching, four shall
be kept till their end begin to approach; but
two shall be kept unto the end.*

The Two that perish'd were the *Decemviri*,
and the Conspirators. The Four that were
kept till the middle Time, or till their End
began to approach, were the two Sorts of
Tribunes,

Tribunes, the Dictators, and the *Triumviri*; and the Two that were kept unto the End, were the Senate and Consuls.

CHAP. xi. 10. *And I beheld, and lo, the voice went not out of her heads, but from the midst of her body.*

CHAP. xii. 17, 18. *As for the voice which thou heardest, and that thou sawest not to go out from the heads, but from the midst of the body thereof, this is the interpretation:*

That after the time of that kingdom, there shall arise great strivings, and it shall stand in peril of falling: nevertheless it shall not then fall, but shall be restored again to his beginning.

This properly and plainly signifies the *Roman Commonwealth*, that middle Space (like the Midst of a Man's Body) standing between the Kings and the Emperors; in which Period the *Roman Laws* were enacted, and the far greatest Part of their Conquests made; and these were the *Voice* that went out into all the World. Now during this Space, or after the Time of that Kingdom, or after the first Kingly Government, 'tis said there should arise great *Strivings*, and it should stand in peril of falling; which was actually and punctually fulfill'd in the Civil War between *Marius* and *Sylla*, and between *Pompey* and *Cæsar*. *Nevertheless it shall not then fall, but*

294 *An EXPLANATION of Ch. XI, XII,*
shall be restor'd again to his Beginning; i. e.
to its Kingly or Monarchical State, as we
find it was in the Event.

CHAP. XI. 12, 13. *And I looked, and behold, on the right side there arose one feather, and reigned over all the earth; and so it was, that when he had reigned, the end of it came, and the place thereof appeared no more.*

This following just after the Account of the Civil Diffensions, can, according to Order of Time, and the Description here given, signify no other than the Rise and Fall of *Julius Cæsar*, who was not only perpetual Dictator, but the first universal Emperor.

CHAP. XI. 13—17. *So the next following stood up, and reigned, and had a great time; and it happen'd, that when it reigned, the end of it came also, like as the first, so that it appeared no more: Then came there a voice unto it, and said, Hear thou that hast borne rule over the earth so long: This I say unto thee, before thou beginnest to appear no more, There shall none after thee attain unto thy time, neither unto the half thereof.*

CHAP. XII. 14, 15. *In the same shall twelve kings reign, one after another; whereof the second shall begin to reign, and shall have more time than any of the twelve.*

This

This is literally true of *Augustus Caesar*, the second *Roman Emperor*, who reigned longer than his Predecessor, or any of his Successors; not one of which, before *Constantine*, attain'd to half his Time. But this Part of the Prophecy had been sufficiently fulfilled, had none of the *ten* succeeding Emperors reigned half so long. For this is spoken only of the twelve first—*And shall have more time than any of the twelve.*

CHAP. XI. 18—21. *Then arose the third, and reigned as the other before, and appeared no more also. So went it with the residue one after another, as that every one reigned, and then appeared no more. Then I beheld, and lo, in process of time, the feathers that followed stood up upon the right side, that they might rule also, and some of them ruled; but within a while they appeared no more: for some of them were set up, but ruled not.*

In these Verses we have an Account of the Remainder of the twelve Emperors; which were not All of the *Casarean* Family. For in process of time the feathers that followed stood up upon the right side. By the *Feathers that followed*, we are, I think, to understand the chief Commanders of the Army, who often affected the Imperial Dignity, and not a few in the latter Times succeeded in their

296 *An* EXPLANATION of Ch. XI, XII,

Attempts this way, which seems to be the Meaning of *standing up upon the right side*, according to what follows, *That they might rule also, and some of them ruled*. The First of these was *Galba*, the seventh Roman Emperor, and the first that was set up by the Army: But before that, while he was in *Spain*, he had himself assumed the Imperial Power. His two immediate Successors, *Otho* and *Vitellius*, were made Emperors by the same means. But all Three were such mere Shadows of Kingly Power, and reigned so very little a while (the Reigns of all together amounting to no more than eighteen Months and eighteen Days) that *Esdra*s here observes, that *some of them were set up, but ruled not*.

CHAP. XI. 22—24. *After this I looked, and behold, the twelve feathers appeared no more, nor the two little feathers: And there was no more upon the eagle's body, but three heads that rested, and six little wings. Then saw I also, that two little feathers divided themselves from the six, and remained under the head that was upon the right side: for the four continued in their place.*

The three Heads I shall consider hereafter, according to what is said *ver. 9.* of this Chapter—*Let the heads be preserved for the last*. The two little Feathers, *ver. 22*, can have no Reference to any thing preceding, because
there

there is no mention of any such thing before ; and therefore must relate to what is said in the following 24th Verse—*Then saw I also, that two little feathers divided themselves from the six*, upon which Account 'tis said, that *they appeared no more*.

Now here 'tis observable, 1. That *Esdra*s passes over all the intermediate Emperors from the twelve *Cæsars* till he comes to the last, or to the three last Heads of *Heathen Rome*. 2. That he distinguishes between the *Wings* and the *Feathers* ; by the former of which we may understand certain Offices, or fix'd and standing Places of Dignity and Power, and by the latter single Persons enjoying any of those Places. According to this Distinction, the *six Wings* will signify the two Sorts of Tribunes, the two Consuls, and the two *Cæsars*. And these are call'd *little Wings*, and said to become *little Feathers and small*, ch. xi. 3, because they had then lost the Power, and retain'd little more than the Form and the Name. Only the *Cæsars* were much the same then as formerly ; though these likewise might be call'd *little* in comparison of the Wings of the Emperors themselves. The two little Feathers then that divided themselves from the six, I take to be *Maxentius* and *Maximian*, the old Emperor that resign'd with *Dioclesian* ; the former being the Son of the latter, and Son-in-law of *Galerius* the then reigning Emperor, and as such might look upon himself as

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298 *An* EXPLANATION of Ch. XI, XII,

no common Man, and even as one of the *Cæsars*; and the other, though he had resign'd, shew'd an Ambition to reign again, and made some Attempts that way. Now these, not contented with their Station, and assuming a greater Power than belonged to them, made a Division or Discession from the six little Wings, and became the Authors of great Commotions and Disturbances in the State; so that *four* only may be said to have continued in their place. At the same time they remain'd under the head that was upon the right side, viz. *Maxentius* by reason of his Affinity to *Galerius*, and *Maximian* on account of his Copartnership with *Dioclesian*.

CH. XI. 25, 26, 27.

And I beheld, and lo, the feathers that were under the wing thought to set up themselves, and to have the rule.

And I beheld, and lo, there was one set up, but shortly it appeared no more.

And the second was sooner away than the first.

CHAP. XII. 29, 30.

And whereas thou sawest two feathers under the wings passing over the head that is on the right side;

It signifieth, that these are they whom the Highest hath kept unto their end: this is the small kingdom, and full of trouble, as thou sawest.

This

This was truly the Fate of those two persecuting Tyrants. After the Death of *Constantius*, and before *Constantine* was settled in his Part of the Government, *Maxentius* assumed the Imperial Dignity; but fearing lest he should not be able to support himself in this bold Attempt, he invited his Father *Maximian* to come and take again the Government upon him, which he readily complied with: And by means of these Two, the greatest Disorders, Confusions, and Calamities beset the *Roman* State for some time. But *Maximian*, who was in truth the *second* Usurper, as he is here said to be, was sooner away than the first; being first routed, and afterwards, on account of the basest Treachery and Conspiracy against *Constantine*, put to death by his Order. The Case of *Maxentius* is well known, and the total Defeat of him and his Army by *Constantine* happen'd about two Years after this. And what is here observ'd, is countenanced and confirmed by the Angel's Interpretation. For as the *small kingdom full of trouble* can be no other than the City of *Rome*, which was then a Kingdom by itself, under the Usurpation and Tyranny of *Maxentius*; so he and *Maximian* are clearly enough describ'd by the *two feathers under the wing passing over the head that is on the right side*. They were the *two feathers under the wing*, as they had some Pretence for their Usurpation for the Reasons
afore-

300 *An* EXPLANATION of Ch. XI, XII,
aforemention'd: And they *pass'd over the*
head on the right side, as they neglected and
despised, and passed by or over *Galerius*, the
oldest reigning Emperor, who had set up
Severus (that was likewise destroy'd by them)
and whose Territories lay on the East or
right Side of Rome.

CHAP. XI. 28. *And I beheld, and lo, the*
two that remained thought also in themselves
to reign.

It does not appear to me, what *the two that*
remain'd do refer to: If to *the six little wings*,
ver. 23, there is mention only of two that
appear'd no more; if to the *four that conti-*
nued in their place, ver. 24, we have no Ac-
count of what became of the other two. Ei-
ther therefore here must be some Error in
the Copy, from which our Translation is
made; or this must have reference to some
other Usurpers, not named in History, or
that I am not able at present to light upon.
One indeed I find taken notice of in *A. D.*
307, whose Name was *Alexander*, who set
up for Emperor in *Africk*, and continued his
Usurpation about four Years. But supposing
this to be one, the other I am still to seek
for; unless we may interpret this other of
Severus, who, upon the Death of *Constantius*,
was made by *Galerius* a Partner with him in
the Empire, in Prejudice to the Right of
young

young *Constantine*; and being soon after sent against *Maxentius*, when he came near the Walls of *Rome*, was deserted by the Army, and pursued and destroy'd by *Maximian*. If then we look upon *Severus* to be an Usurper as well as *Alexander*, these may be the *two that remained*, and that thought in themselves to reign. However, to leave this as Matter of some Doubt, and for farther Examination, I pass on to that which will appear more clear and certain.

CHAP. xi. 29. *And when they so thought, behold, there awaked one of the heads that were at rest, namely, it that was in the midst, for that was greater than the two other heads.*

CHAP. xii. 22—25. *And whereas thou sawest three heads resting, this is the interpretation:*

In his last days shall the Most High raise up three kingdoms, and renew many things therein, and they shall have the dominion of the earth,

And of those that dwell therein, with much oppression, above all those that were before them: therefore are they called the heads of the eagle.

For these are they that shall accomplish his wickedness, and shall finish his last end.

In these two Passages there are several things to be explain'd; but to take them in their Order.

1. In the foregoing Exposition I enquired who those *Two* might be that are said to remain, after the Destruction of the former *Two*, viz. *Maxentius* and *Maximian*; and I made some Doubt then, whether History might furnish us with two such Instances at that Time: But upon farther Thoughts, I find now that we shall be able to come to something of Certainty in this Point, if we only make use of one Rule, that is necessary to be observ'd in expounding the Prophets, that is, To consider the same Person under a double, and sometimes contrary Character or Capacity. For as in *Dramatick* Performances the same Person does sometimes act different Parts, and sustain different Characters; so in these and the like Prophetical Visions, we are sometimes to view one and the same Person in different Lights. Thus *Cyrus*, as he was an *Heathen Prince* and an *Idolater*, is to be look'd upon as an Enemy to God's Church; but as he was *chosen* and ordain'd by Him to be a Deliverer of his People, he is call'd his *Servant* and his *Anointed*. If this then be allow'd in the present Case, all will be easy and clear. For supposing *Alexander*, the Ufurper in *Africk*, to be one of the *Two* that remain'd, *Maximin*, by this means, will be found to be the other; as he was both *Cæsar* and *Augustus*; *Cæsar* by Right or Nomination, and *Augustus* or Emperor only by Ufurpation. And in these respects he is to be consider'd both as one of the Feathers under the

the

the Wing that thought to reign, and as one of the three Heads of the Eagle that actually did reign for some time; and against which (taken in the first Sense, or as strictly no more than *Cæsar*) *Licinius*, the middle and greater Head, *awaked*, and against no other.

2. The three Heads of the Eagle, as I have intimated already, and as the Angel here interprets them, denote three Kingdoms or Kings in the declining State of *Heathen Rome* (*for these are they that shall accomplish her wickedness, and finish her last end, ver. 25.*) that were to rule at one and the same time, and to have the Dominion of the Earth above all those that were before them. And these were *Galerius*, *Licinius*, and *Maximin*, between which three the Dominion of the Earth was divided. 'Tis true, *Constantine* was then one of the Rightful Emperors, as Successor to, and by the Will of his Father; but he was not acknowledged by *Galerius* for some time, under any higher Title than that of *Cæsar*, and had but little Sway or Command before the Death of that old Emperor. *Licinius* was chosen and taken in upon the Death of *Severus*, by the joint Consent of *Galerius* and *Dioclesian*, who had resign'd; and *Maximin*, who was *Cæsar* before, assumed thereupon the Title of *Augustus*, and ruled as Emperor with full Power in the East. Besides, *Constantine*, as we shall see by and by, is represented in this Vision under a quite different Character, and can no way be said to be one of

304 *An* EXPLANATION of Ch. XI, XII,
of the Heads that *should accomplish the Wicked-*
ness of the *Heathen Roman Empire*.

3. These three Heads are said to *rest*, that is, so long as they agreed together, or did not endeavour to extirpate or destroy each other. Though each of them persecuted the Christians, they were not at open Enmity between themselves. *Galerius*, after the Death of *Constantius*, who was Partner with him in the Empire for five Years together, or to the Time of his own Death, made no Attempt against *Licinius* or *Maximin*, though the last had, against his Will and Consent, usurp'd the Title of *Augustus*, and acted as such. And for about the same Space of Time there was no open War, Hostility, or Contention between *Licinius* and *Maximin*. So far and so long were the Heads of the Eagle at rest.

4. 'Tis said by the Angel, that *in his last days shall the Most High set up three kingdoms, i. e.* in the last Days of the *Heathen Roman Empire*. And this Part of the Prophecy was fulfill'd in a most remarkable and wonderful Manner: For that the fourth universal Monarchy of the World, which had so long been in the Possession of single Persons, should at last by Consent, as it were, or at least without Conquest or Opposition, be split asunder, and divided into three large Kingdoms, and be govern'd by three independent Powers, was an Event so strange, so unexpected, and so unlikely, that nothing but a plain

plain Prophecy could have made it credible beforehand, and nothing perhaps, before or since, is to be met with in History parallel to it. This was as great a Prodigy in the *Political* World, as a *three-headed Eagle* (here made the Emblem of such a State) would be in the *Natural*. Nor was it less strange, that this surprizing Partition, that seem'd so firmly settled and establish'd, should immediately dwindle away and come to nought, and that those who were the First Sharers in it should likewise be the Last. For though *Galerius* nominated and appointed a Successor after *Constantius*, and another after *Severus*, he had no Successor himself; and the Divisions of *Licinius* and *Maximin*, after their Deaths, came to an End, and all return'd again into the old Channel, and the whole Empire was govern'd by *Constantine* alone; whereby the Christians were freed from Persecution, and settled in a lasting Peace and Security. *This was the Lord's doing*, this was signified unto *Esdra*s in a Vision and by an Angel.

CH. xi. 33—35.

And after this I beheld, and lo, the head that was in the midst suddenly appeared no more, like as the wings.

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But

CH. xii. 26—28.

And whereas thou sawest that the great head appeared no more, it signifies that one of them shall die upon

X

his

But there remained his bed, and yet with
 the two heads, which pain.
 also in like sort ruled For the two that
 upon the earth, and remain shall be slain
 over those that dwelt with the sword.
 therein.

For the sword of
 And I beheld, and the one shall devour
 lo, the head upon the the other: but at the
 right side devoured it last shall he fall thro'
 that was upon the left the sword himself.
 side.

The Death or End of the three before-
 mention'd exactly answers the Description
 here given by the Angel. The *First*, ac-
 cording to *ch. xii. 26*, was *Galerius*, the great
 Head, who died upon his Bed, but not with-
 out most exquisite and intolerable Pains. *Li-*
cinus was the *Second* or middle Head, which
 in the Vision, but not in the Interpretation,
 is said to be greater than the other two, tho'
 the first be call'd the great Head; the Rea-
 son of which might be, either that the Ter-
 ritories allotted to *Licinius* lay between those
 of *Maximin* and *Galerius*, or that *Licinius*
 had the larger Extent of Dominion, but *Ga-*
lerius a greater Exercise of Power, since he
 not only ruled and commanded the two old
 Emperors, and even forced them to resign,
 but created the two new ones, *Severus* and
Licinius, himself; who being the middle and
 greater Head in some respects, and the Head

on the right side, devoured it that was on the left side, or as 'tis in the Interpretation, the sword of the one devoured the other. For when *Maximin* began to extend his Dominions, and thought to reign Alone, and for that purpose came to oppose *Licinius*, he and his whole Army were totally defeated by a much smaller Force, and himself came to a miserable End: After which the Power and Territories of the other were much enlarged, according to what is said, *ch. xi. 32.* For this head put the whole earth then in fear, and bare rule in it over all those that dwelt upon the earth, with much oppression, and it had the governance of the world, more than all the wings that had been. But then, as 'tis said *ch. xii. 28,* that at last he should fall by the sword himself; so after he had turn'd his Hand against the Christians, and began to persecute them, he was quite overthrown in one Battle by the victorious Arms of *Constantine*; and though his Life was spared for some time, yet, on account of some base Attempts afterwards, he was put to Death by his Order. So punctually and remarkably was this Part of the Vision fulfill'd; and such was the fatal Catastrophe of these three Heads of the Roman Eagle, the last Remains of *Heathen* Power in the fourth Kingdom! And no less calamitous was the End of the three preceding Persecutors, *Dioclesian*, *Maximian*, and *Maxentius*, who were All, in their turns,

308 *An* EXPLANATION of Ch. XI, XII,
the great Instruments of promoting and carrying on the tenth and last general Persecution against the Christians.

CHAP. XI. 37, &c. *I beheld, and lo, as it were, a roaring lion chased out of the wood: and I saw that he sent out a man's voice unto the eagle, and said, &c.*

CHAP. XII. 31—34. *And the lion whom thou sawest arising up out of the wood, and roaring and speaking unto the eagle, and rebuking her for her unrighteousness, with all the words which thou hast heard, this is the Anointed which the Highest hath kept for them, and for their wickedness unto the end. He shall reprove them, and shall upbraid them with their cruelty. For he shall set them before him alive in judgment, and shall rebuke them, and correct them. For the rest of my people shall he deliver with mercy, those that have been preserved on my borders; and he shall make them joyful unto the coming of the day of judgment, whereof I have spoken unto thee from the beginning.*

All Circumstances consider'd, no Person, I believe, can be thought of, to whom the several Particulars in this Part of the Vision can be so justly or so properly applied, as to *Constantine the Great*; who was long in the *Wood*, and for some time kept his noble
Views

Views and pious Purposes to himself; but at last was chased out by an immediate Call from Heaven, to rebuke the wicked Eagle, the Heads and Remnants of the Gentiles, to upbraid them with their Cruelty, their bloody and barbarous Persecutions of the Christians, to set them before him alive in Judgment; and to deliver the People of God with Mercy. This was the *Anointed*, which the Highest reserv'd for that great Season of Vengeance and Deliverance. And how faithfully he perform'd his Will and executed his Commands, there can be no Occasion of mentioning here. I shall only therefore endeavour to obviate one Objection that may be made against this Construction; from the last Words—*He shall make them joyful to the coming of the day of judgment*; which at first may be thought to point at some Event much nearer to the End of the World. But when 'tis consider'd, that this has been, for the most part, the real Case of the Church of *Christ* ever since the Days of this Religious Emperor, whose Establishment of Christianity upon so firm and solid a Basis, (the visible and marvellous Work of a Divine Power) neither the Policy of Men, nor the Gates of Hell have ever yet been able to prevail against; we have Reason to trust, that the remaining Part of this Prediction will be alike fulfill'd—*He shall make them joyful to the coming of the day of judgment.*

After the Speech of the Lion to the End of the Eleventh Chapter, there follows in the Beginning of the next to the Middle of the fourth Verse, some farther Account of the Eagle and his Wings; but as this seems to relate to what has been expounded before, and is not interpreted by the Angel, I shall say no more to this Part, than that the *burning of the whole Body of the Eagle* most probably denotes the Destruction of *Heathenism* by little and little, through the exemplary Zeal and Piety of the Christians.

I have now finish'd the Exposition; and upon the whole, I can't but observe, 1. That beautiful Variety of surprizing Events, which this one Figure of the Eagle represents to us, and the admirable Wisdom and Contrivance of God, in making the very *Ensign* of the *Roman* Empire a lively Picture of its own State, in all its Forms and Vicissitudes: For all which, it might have been thought, that one single Figure could never have been sufficient, and that a Prophecy which exhibits to us so many and such different Events, must thereby have been stinted, limited, and obscur'd; whereas to a diligent Observer, I believe, it will appear on the contrary, to be a bright, regular, and uniform Prophecy in all its Parts, and such as may justly be esteem'd for its Evidence, and Clearness, and the Extent of its Views, as noble a Prophecy *in its*

its Kind, as any we meet with among the Prophets of the Old Testament. And so far is it from carrying in it any Marks of Forgery or Imposture, that it seems to be beyond the Power of Human Wit and Invention to contrive such a Vision as this, even from Facts already past, so extremely suitable to the Prophetick Genius and Language, to that Mixture of Clearness and Obscurity, of Sublimeness and Simplicity, to that Fullness of Matter and Conciseness of Expression, to that Order and Method that is observable in the Writings of the true undoubted Prophets. Nay farther, If the Sense I have given of the Eleventh and Twelfth Chapters, shall be found, upon Enquiry, to be right and true, the Divine Authority of the Vision therein represented will then be unquestionable. For 'tis manifest beyond all Contradiction, by the Passages cited from this Book by the earlier Fathers, as *Justin Martyr*, *Tertullian*, &c. that it could not be written so late as the Beginning of the fourth Century: And if it were written any time before, it follows from thence that it must be written with a *Prophetick Spirit*; and if it were written with a *Prophetick Spirit*, why should it not be written before *any Part* of the Events therein specified did commence? And if 'tis most reasonable and natural to suppose, that the *Whole* was written before the Beginning of any of the corresponding

312 *An* EXPLANATION of Ch. XI, XII,
Events, the *Æra* of this Prophecy cannot be
fixed at any Time more likely, than that
mention'd by the Author himself, *viz.* Four
Hundred Years before the Coming of *Christ*,
ch. vii. 28.

2. As I have shewn before that Part of the
Twelfth Chapter of the *Revelation* relates to
that great Turn of Affairs in the *Roman* Em-
pire under *Constantine the Great*, and have
now likewise consider'd and explain'd Part of
these two Chapters of *Esdras* as referring to
the same signal Event; so I shall here ob-
serve, that this was likewise foretold by
some of the old Prophets, particularly by
Zechariah, in the third Chapter; where he
is shewn *Joshua the High-priest*, standing be-
fore the Angel of the Lord, cloathed with fil-
thy garments, and Satan standing at his right
hand to resist him: which most fitly represents
the outwardly miserable State of the Primi-
tive Church under Persecution from the Hea-
then Powers, and by the Instigation of the
Accuser of the Brethren. *And the Lord said*
unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan;
the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke
thee: Is not this a brand plucked out of the
fire? And what could more appositely be
said of the dangerous State, and wonderful
Deliverance of that Church? *And the Lord*
spake unto the men that stood before Joshua,
Take away the filthy garments from him: and
to him he said, Behold, I have caused thine
iniquity

iniquity to pass from thee, and I will cloath thee with change of raiment; and I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. All which is a bright and lively Representation of the happy Turn of Affairs, with respect to the suffering Christians, by the Conversion and Victories of that pious and potent Emperor.

Now the Reason why this great Event is so frequently and so particularly taken notice of, seems to be, because this was not only a signal Demonstration of God's extraordinary Power and Goodness to that *Church of the First-born*, but design'd likewise as an eminent and illustrious Type of the most prosperous and flourishing State of the Church in the last Days. Therefore is *Esdra*s enjoin'd by a Voice from Heaven to pay a more particular Attention and Regard to this Part of the Vision vouchsafed unto him.—*Then I heard a voice which said unto me, Look before thee, and consider the thing that thou seest,* ch. xi. 36. And what he then saw, was the Lion coming out of the Wood, to rebuke the Eagle, and to deliver the People.

I might now proceed to shew, that there are other clear and important Prophecies in this second Book of *Esdra*s, besides what is contained in the two Chapters I have consider'd; but at present it shall suffice to give a *Specimen* of these in the few following Passages.

CHAP. V. 4—9. *If the Most High grant thee to live, thou shalt see after the third trumpet, that the Sun shall suddenly shine again in the night, and the moon thrice in the day.*

And blood shall drop out of the wood, and the stone shall give his voice, and the people shall be troubled.*

And even he shall rule whom they look not for that dwell upon the earth, and the fowls shall take their flight away together.

And the Sodomitish sea shall cast out fish, and make a noise in the night, which many have not known; but they shall all hear the voice thereof.

There shall be a confusion also in many places, and the fire shall be oft sent out again, and the wild beasts shall change their places, and monstrous women shall bring forth monsters.

And salt waters shall be found in the sweet, and all friends shall destroy one another.—

This seems to be a clear, but very curious Description of the general Conflagration. *If*

* These Words are cited in the Catholick Epistle of St. Barnabas, (which is another Testimony of the Antiquity of this Book of *Esdra*s) but applied by the Author to the *Blood of the Cross*; whereas 'tis said, not that Blood shall drop *on* or *from*, but *out of* the Wood; and therefore the Sense I have given of those Words, and of the whole Passage, appears to me to be the most easy and natural.

the

the Most High grant thee to live; i. e. not till that Time, but to live then again, or to have a Part in the first Resurrection, (for he is speaking of the last Days) thou shalt see after the third trumpet, (This may signify no other than what is call'd by St. John the seventh Trumpet, and by St. Paul the last Trump: but for the full Meaning of the Expression I refer the Reader to Dr. Lee's Dissertation, pag. 88, &c.) that the sun shall suddenly shine again in the night, and the moon thrice in the day. That there will then be great Confusions, Disturbances, and Changes in the heavenly Bodies, is plain from several Places of Scripture; and what is here said may be literally fulfill'd. And the understanding this of the Conflagration, explains the Blood dropping out of the Wood, and the Stone's giving his Voice, the Moisture issuing out of green Wood by the Force of Fire very much resembling Blood, and the cracking and bursting of Stones in the midst of Flames is fitly represented, in a prophetical Description, as giving their Voice: And in the 8th Verse 'tis expressly said, that the fire shall be often sent out again, which is a plain Intimation both that the Angel had been speaking of Fire before, and also that this Fire will be gradual, or sent now upon one Place, and then upon another, till the several kindled Places meet and unite in one Flame; and then shall the fowls take their flight away together,
which

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which is a lively Image of the general Desolation that will ensue upon the Burning of the World, and the very same that is used by *Jeremiah* on the same Occasion—*I beheld, and lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled, Jer. iv. 25.* As to the remaining Part of this Passage, I only observe, that there will be many things in that Day of Desolation and Consternation, that may now appear very monstrous and incredible.

CHAP. vii. 28, 29, 30. *For my son Jesus shall be revealed with those that be with him, and they that remain shall rejoice within four hundred years. After these years shall my son Christ die, and all men that have life. And the world shall be turned into the old silence seven days, like as in the former judgments: so that no man shall remain.*

I do not produce this Passage with a Design to expound it; for as it now stands, it appears to be inexplicable and unintelligible; and there seems to be not barely an Error of the Transcriber, but some wilful Corruption and Perversion of the Text. Whether the Names of *Jesus* and *Christ* did originally belong to it, is uncertain. They are not found, it seems, in the *Arabick* Copy; and possibly they might be inserted to render the whole suspected,

suspected, though, as the learned Dr. Lee observes, the Names of *the Saviour of the World* might surely be as well foretold as those of a *Josiah* and a *Cyrus**. The Corruption of this Passage, whatever it be, seems more directly levell'd against the mention of the *four hundred years*, which is so glaring an Evidence of the great Antiquity of this Book, so express a Prediction of the Time of *Christ's* first Advent, and so full a Confirmation of the Sense given by Christian Writers of *Daniel's* seventy Weeks. For by this Account the Author lived thirty-four Years or thereabouts after the Prophet *Malachi*, the most probable Time that can be assign'd for these Visions and Revelations. And these being partly *Prophetical*, and partly *Cabbalistical*, might at first for some time be only in the Hands of a Few, and those too *Jews* only. But after the Beginning of Christianity, some harden'd and inveterate *Jew*, that had the Custody of this *Apocryphal* or hidden Book, out of Hatred to the Name and Doctrine of *Christ*, and fearing lest this Testimony might be urged against them hereafter by some of those *Jews* that had likewise Copies of the same, and that were converted to Christianity, may not improbably be supposed to endeavour to obscure this Evidence, by those Corruptions and In-

* See a Review of this Passage at the End.

terpolations that manifestly appear, or at least are strongly suspected to have been inserted in this remarkable Passage. And we shall the less wonder at this, and be the less averse to believe it, if we consider that there is no Part of Canonical Scripture which the Devil has all along more labour'd to corrupt or suppress, than the Prophetical Writings, especially such as look forward to the latter Days: Witness his too successful Attempts for some time in the Beginning against the Prophecy of *Daniel*, the Revelation of *St. John*, and the second Epistle of *St. Peter*; the first, which more particularly concerns the *Jews*, being to this Day held in very little Esteem by them; and the other two were at first suspected and doubted of by some, and rejected by others, for no better Grounds or Reason that appears, than the Difference of Style therein from what is observable in the other Writings of those two Apostles. And a worse Fate than what has happen'd to either of these, is supposed by some to have attended the second Book of *Esdra*s. But as the *Jews* have a Saying, *Cum Elias venerit, solvet nodos*, When *Elias* comes, he will clear up all Doubts and Difficulties; so we may hope that the Providence of God will at last open some way for discovering the true Meaning of all the Seven Visions of *Esdra*s; whose Second Book, or that which now goes under his Name, contains Matters of the greatest

of the Second Book of ESDRAS. 319
greatest Moment in relation to the second
Coming of Christ, as may partly appear
from what has been observ'd already, and
may yet farther from the following conclu-
ding Passage.

CHAP. xiii, I—II. *And it came to pass af-
ter seven days, I dreamed a dream by night.*

*And lo, there arose a wind from the sea (or
a certain Man as the Wind, Marg.) that it
moved all the waves thereof.*

*And I beheld, and lo, that man waxed strong
with the thousands (Clouds, Marg.) of heaven:
and when he turned his countenance to look, all
the things trembled that were seen under him.*

*And whensoever the voice went out of his
mouth, all they burnt that heard his voice, like
as the earth faileth when it feeleth the fire.*

*And after this I beheld, and lo, there was
gathered together a multitude of men, out of
number, from the four winds of heaven, to sub-
due this man that came out of the sea.*

*But I beheld, and lo, he had graved himself
a great mountain, and flew up upon it.*

*But I would have seen the region or place,
whereout the hill was graven, and I could not.*

*And after this I beheld, and lo, all they
which were gathered together to subdue him,
were sore afraid, and yet durst fight.*

*And lo, as he saw the violence of the
multitude that came, he neither lift up his
hand,*

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hand, nor held sword, nor any instrument of
war.

But only I saw that he sent out of his mouth as it had been a blast of fire, and out of his lips a strong breath, and out of his tongue he cast out sparks of tempests.

And they were all mix'd together, the blast of fire, the flaming breath, and the great tempest; and fell with violence upon the multitude which were prepared to fight, and burnt them up every one, so that upon a sudden of an innumerable multitude nothing was to be perceived, but only dust and smell of smoke: when I saw this, I was afraid.

This Account is exactly parallel to, and may serve to explain that Description which St. John has given us of the *Battle of the great Day of God Almighty*, in a Place called *Armageddon* *. There's no need of explaining all the Particulars; the few following may be sufficient.

Ver. 6. *I beheld, and lo, he had graven himself a great mountain, and flew up upon it: Which Words answer to and serve to confirm the Interpretation I have given in the Preface to the General View of the Revelation, of that Part of Nebuchadnezzar's Dream, which*

* See Rev. xvi. 13, 14, 16; xvii. 13, 14; and xix. 11. to the End.

relates

relates to the Mountain and the Stone; namely, the Conversion of the *Jews* at that Time denoted by the *Stone*, but grown to a great *Mountain* by the Coming in of the Fulness of the *Gentiles* into the Church; for the Defence of which against the whole Power of Antichrist, our Saviour is both here and in the *Revelation* represented as coming speedily and with terrible Majesty. *He flew up upon the Mountain*, that is, for the Defence and Protection of his new Converts, and cover'd them, as it were, with his Wings. *But I would have seen*, says *Esdra*s, *the Region or Place whereout the Hill was graven*; which intimates the great Desire that Men will have in those Days to know by what means the *Jews* were converted, and at last will be convinced that no Human Means (comparatively speaking) were used or aiding in this Case; and so 'tis interpreted *ver. 36.* of this Chapter.

Ver. 8. *After this I beheld, and lo, all they which were gathered together to subdue him; were sore afraid, and yet durst fight.* In these Words we have a most natural and beautiful Image of that Mixture of Dread and Desperateness that will attend this Antichristian Attempt. Before I consider'd and understood this Passage, it was always an horrid and shocking Thought to me to suppose that Rational Creatures could be capable of such

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monstrous Hardiness as to dare to fight a-
gainst the Lamb or Son of God in Person,
appearing to them as such, and coming
down with an Heavenly Host*. But this
Sentence very much tends to relieve our
Minds, and to remove great part of that
Astonishment. For here 'tis said *they were*
fore afraid, and yet, by a strange Diabolical
Infatuation and Instigation, durst proceed in
their desperate Attempt.

*Verses 9, 10, 11, very fully and particu-
larly explain what St. John means by the
Sword coming out of his Mouth, and the
utter Decision of such Multitudes of Men at
once, as also by the piercing Convictions of
their own Conscience, and the fiery Rebukes
of the Law, ver. 38.*

A REVIEW of Chap. vii. 28—31.

*For my son Jesus shall be revealed with those
that be with him, and they that remain shall
rejoice within four hundred years.*

*After these years shall my son Christ die,
and all men that have life.*

*And the world shall be turned into the old
silence seven days, like as in the former judg-
ments: so that no man shall remain.*

* Rev. xvii. 14. *These shall make war with the Lamb,
and the Lamb shall overcome them. See likewise Chap. xix.
14, 19.*

And

And after seven days, the world that yet awaketh not shall be raised up, and that shall die that is corrupt.

This obscure Passage, which for some time I look'd upon as inexplicable and unintelligible, appears now, after farther Enquiry, to be capable of a Solution, that is very reconcileable to the Analogy of Faith, but whether sufficiently expressive of the Sense of the Words or not, I leave to the Judgment of the Reader.

1. I observe, as to the Names of our Saviour here so particularly and distinctly mention'd, and that too, as is supposed, by God himself, that *Clemens Alexandrinus*, in the Sixth Book of his *Stromata*, p. 678. (as I find him quoted by the learned Mr. *Richardson* in his *Canon of the New Testament vindicated*, p. 52. Edit. 3.) tells us, out of the *Preaching of St. Peter*, that *the Prophets named Jesus Christ in express Words*. Now 'tis usual for the Fathers and others to say, that the *Prophets* say so, when perhaps 'tis said only by *one* of them. But no True Undoubted Prophet has mention'd our Saviour by Name, nor any Reputed Prophet, except *Esdra*s; and therefore we may conclude, that both *Clemens* and the Author of that Uncanonical Piece had an Eye to him, and to the very Passage now under Consideration; and

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consequently, that these Names of our Sa-
viour were read in the Copy or Copies then
made use of; but whether they were in the
Original Text, must be learnt from more
early Testimonies, if any such could be had.
However, as I have observ'd before, that
these might be inserted at first with a Design
to render the whole suspected; so now I can-
not but observe, that they might likewise
be omitted (as they are in the *Arabick* Copy)
on account of some such Suspicion, or as be-
ing thought *too plain* and *express* to belong
to the Original Text.

2. 'Tis worthy our Notice, that the Term
here mention'd of four hundred Years, has
a plain Reference and directly answers to the
Angel's Representation in the two following
Passages.——CHAP. iv. 45—50. *Shew me
then whether there be more to come than is
past, or more past than is to come. What is
past I know, but what is for to come I know
not. And he said unto me, Stand up upon the
right side, and I shall expound the similitude
unto thee. So I stood and saw, and behold,
an hot burning oven passed by before me: and
it happened, that when the flame was gone
by, I looked, and behold, the smoke remained
still. After this there passed by before me a
watry cloud, and sent down much rain with a
storm; and when the stormy rain was past, the
drops remained still. Then said he unto me,
Consider*

Consider with thyself: as the rain is more than the drops, and as the fire is greater than the smoke, but the drops and the smoke remain behind; so the quantity which is past did more exceed. Again, CHAP. xiv. 10, 11, 12. The world hath lost his youth, and the times begin to wax old. For the world is divided into twelve parts, and the ten parts of it are gone already, and half of a tenth part: And there remaineth that which is after the half of the tenth part.

Now as the Drops and Smoke remaining were to the stormy Rain, and to the Fire in the Oven; and as One and an Half is to Twelve, so are four Hundred Years to four Thousand: That is, All Three seem design'd to shew and express an equal Distance of Time from That to the End of the *Jewish* State or Oeconomy, or to the Time of our Saviour's First Advent; since, as the Angel assures *Esdra*s, this would come to pass within four Hundred Years from the Time of his speaking. Dividing therefore the Age of the World at the Birth of *Christ* into twelve equal Parts, each Part will be found (as near as it can well be divided) to be three Hundred thirty-three Years; which, compared with four Thousand, are but as Drops falling after a great Shower, or as the Smoke of an Oven after the Flame is put out. And if we add to this Number (to make up the four Hundred Years) sixty-seven, and seventy

Years more from thence to the Destruction of *Jerusalem* or Cessation of the *Jewish* Polity, these two Numbers together (*viz.* 137) come pretty near to an Half of one of the twelve Divisions, and make it answer the Angel's Calculation of Ten Parts and an Half *past*, and One Part and an Half *still remaining*. This then, I presume, being sufficiently clear, the main Difficulty now will be to account for the World's being divided into twelve Parts, and for those Parts reaching no farther than to the First Coming of *Christ*, or to the last Dispersion of the *Jews*, after the Destruction of their City and Temple by the *Romans*. Now This, I conceive, may be fairly solv'd by only considering that antient and general Division of the World into *present* and *future*; not with respect to what we commonly call the *future State*, but with respect to the State of the World that now is; which has been distinguish'd both by *Jews* and *Christians* into the World that then was, and the World to come. This Distinction seems plainly countenanced and warranted by *St. Paul*, in that noted Passage——*For unto the Angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come,* (τὴν οὐκ ἐμένην τὴν μέλλουσαν) *whereof we speak.* (*Heb.* ii. 5. Which being spoken in the present Tense, must refer to what he was speaking of just before; and that is in relation to the Christian Dispensation, or the Gospel-State.

If then the *Gospel*, or *Christian State*, might not improperly be call'd by one who was in that State, *the World to come*; how much more properly might those that lived under the *Jewish Dispensation*, and before the Christian commenced, esteem and call the one by the Name of the *present World*, and the other by the Name of that *which is to come*, and consequently so speak of the former, as if nothing at all were to come after; as the Angel tells *Esdra*s that ten Parts of the World were gone already, and Half of a tenth Part; so that there remained only one Part and an Half out of the twelve Parts of that present World, and at the End of that Remainder the World would be concluded. Besides, there is a natural and obvious Reason for understanding the Words in this Sense, namely, that the *New World* might begin with and be reckon'd from the *Second Adam*, as the *Old World* was from the *First*. There was a new and extraordinary Creation in both Cases, and a Commencement under each of a distinct Generation of Men, by which the World stands divided and distinguished into two general Parts; *Christ* being the Head, Root, or Representative of the one, as *Adam* is of the other, But,

3. 'Tis said, *ver. 29, After these years shall my son Christ die, and all men that have life,*

This indeed has been thought an insuperable Difficulty, and sufficient to overthrow every thing that is alledg'd by this Author in the way of Prophecy. But let us consider that the Language of the Prophets is often very dark and ænigmatical, pointing, as it were, to one Thing, and meaning another; whereby the true Sense is (as I may say) sealed up, and purposely hid from our Eyes. This I take to be the present Case, with respect to this Verse and Part of the following, which seem to intimate the Death of all Men, and the Dissolution of all Things just after the Revelation of *Christ*, or at the Expiration of four Hundred Years. But there are *Two* Revelations of *Christ*, and the Prophets frequently mention Both together, or one just after the other, and sometimes in the very same Verse. A remarkable Instance of this we have *Zech. xiv. 1—4.* *Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the East; and the Mount of*
Olives

Olivcs shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the East and toward the West, and there shall be a very great valley, and half of the mountain shall remove toward the North, and half of it toward the South. Now the two first Verses are allow'd by all to relate to the last Dispersion of the *Jews*, and their Destruction by *Titus Vespasian*; and the fourth, and what follows, can refer to no other Event than the second Coming of *Christ*. Nor is this all; but even the third Verse, which seems to be connected by the Particle *Then* to the foregoing, has a more direct Reference to what is said in the Verse following. And this is the Sense which the late learned Mr. *Lowth* gives of that Verse, and then concludes with this Observation — “ ’Tis no unusual thing
“ for the Holy Writers to speak of two E-
“ vents together, which happen at a great
“ Distance from each other. So we read
“ 1 Cor. xv. 23. *Christ the first-fruits, after-*
“ *wards they that are Christ's at his coming.*” In like manner we may interpret these Words — *After these years shall my son Christ die,*
and all men that have life; that is, not at the Time of his Death, or of his *First* Coming, but of his *Second*, to which the following Words plainly refer; and there too we find much the same Expression, *so that no man shall remain;* and therefore both may reasonably be thought to belong to the same Time, viz. the final Dissolution and Restitu-
tion

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tion of all Things, as there describ'd. So
that, upon the whole, this Verse may be
said to include the two Advents of *Christ*,
according to what is more clearly and em-
phatically express'd *Chap. ii. 34. He is nigh*
at hand, that shall come in the end of the
world. And this may farther appear from
considering,

4. The Sense and Import of the two fol-
lowing Verses—*And the world shall be turned*
into the old silence seven days, like as in the
former judgments: so that no man shall re-
main. And after seven days, the world that
yet awaketh not shall be raised up, and that
shall die that is corrupt. What is here in
the Text call'd *former judgments*, is render'd
by our Translators in the Margin, the *first*
beginning, which makes this Passage much
more clear and intelligible. For this seems
to be a plain Allusion to the Creation of the
World in six Days, and a Prophetick Ac-
count of the Formation of the new World
somewhat conformably thereto. Before and
in order to this, the Earth and all that there-
in is will be burnt up; so that *all men shall*
die that have life, and no man shall remain:
Between which two Expressions there is a re-
markable Difference; the former signifying
the Death or Destruction of all Men at that
Time, the other implying only the Desola-
tion of the Earth, which will then be void
of

of Inhabitants; *so that no man shall remain.* The first then relates to the Wicked, who will all be destroy'd in the fiery Deluge, the other to the Righteous which shall then be found alive: These will not be destroy'd, nor yet be left behind or remain upon Earth, but, as St. Paul assures us (and he seems to allude to this Passage in *Esdras*) *be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.* When therefore the Wicked are consumed, and the Righteous removed, and that dead or destroy'd *that is corrupt*; ver. 31, then shall *the world be turned into the old silence seven days, as in the first beginning*: That is, as a sacred and profound silence attended the Creation of the Old World; so, during the Formation of the New, there shall neither Speech nor Language be heard. The Old World was created in six Days, to intimate or presignify, according to the general Opinion of the Antients, the Time of its Duration: The New World is to last a thousand Years, which being added to the preceding will make up seven thousand, and therefore is to be seven Days in forming, and to be consecrated (as it were) by a Silence of seven Days (See *Hab. ii. 20.*) as the other was by a six Days Silence; this being to introduce the great Sabbath of Rest prepared for the People of God, and the Restauration of Man to his Primitive State. Therefore after the Destruction of the Old World, and after seven
Days

Days from thence, in which the Earth shall lie dormant and be silent, *the world that yet awaketh not shall be raised up*, and be prepared for the Reception of Man, at the Resurrection of the Just, which, according to *ver. 32*, will immediately follow: So that as our Saviour rose from the Dead on the Eighth Day, that is, the Day after the Seventh; so by this Account in *Esdras* it appears, that after seven Days Work in forming the *new Heavens* and the *new Earth*, the Saints will be raised on the eighth Day, to take Possession of the new Paradisaical State, and of the *holy city, the New Jerusalem*, *come down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband*, (*Rev. xxi. 2.*) And therefore in this respect as well as in others, that is, on account of the Day of his Rising, *Christ is become the First-fruits of them that sleep.*

7 AP 53

S. D. G.

END of the FIRST VOLUME.

